

COBALT-SERIES

谷  
瑞恵

# 伯爵と妖精

あいつは優雅な大悪党

Hakushaku to Yousei

vol.14: For whom the sacred land dreams

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[Novel Updates](#)

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## エドガー

貴族の出だが、プリンス率いる謎の組織に売り飛ばされ、苛酷な運命を経た後に、リディアの協力で青騎士伯爵の地位を手に入れる。プリンスへの復讐をひとまず果たすが、彼の「記憶」を受け継いだまま、リディアと結婚することに…。

## リディア

妖精の姿が見え、話もできる少女。エドガーに妖精伯爵として雇われ、あまい口説き言葉に振り回されてきたが、プリンスと戦うエドガーの力になりたいと気づき、彼のプロポーズを受け入れる。

## ニコ

猫の姿をした妖精。リディアの幼なじみで相棒。ふてふてしい性格だが、身なりや食事にうるさく、紳士を気取っている。

## ブライアン

オーロラの妖精フィル・ミリースの血をひく青年。ティアの兄と称し、完全な妖精になってしまうまでのひとときをともに過ごそうと言うのだが…。

## パトリック

マッキール家族長に仕える妖精博士。マッキール家の危機に際し、予言者を蘇らせようとした画策する。

## レイヴン

エドガーの従者で、神秘的な雰囲気の少年。武術は相当な腕を持ち、主人には完璧に忠実。

# 伯爵と妖精

登場人物紹介

# Chapter 1: The return at early summer

The London sky was unusually cloudless.

Above the River Thames, a flock of birds circled about. Ships unfurled their white sails to catch the refreshing winds and set off on their journeys with pride.

Amidst the echoing of various signals, the steam whistles and the shouts of sailors, was this perfectly formed crowd of people aiming to board the passenger ships that crossed the Atlantic Ocean? For while there were refined travelers, there were the laborers that dreamed of striking it rich amongst them too.

Off to the side, amongst the large scale ships that refrained from making such a long voyage, was an ocean liner moored in the domestic harbor. Its bell continued to ring, urging passengers to board.

“I have to go.”

Lydia said, but Edgar wouldn’t let go of her hand so easily.

“But there’s still ten minutes until departure.”

There’s only ten minutes left.

Lydia’s father, who had sensibly boarded ahead of time, was probably beside himself worrying about whether Lydia would miss boarding or not. However, Edgar, who was reluctant to part, lifted up the hand he was tightly grasping and kissed its gloved fingers.

Seemingly unsatisfied with just that, he pulled Lydia’s head, which was covered in a bonnet, closer to him and kissed her on the forehead.

He was Earl Edgar Ashenbert, and Lydia’s fiancé. Although he was known as an earl of many love affairs and had gained a reputation throughout high society for being a philanderer, he suddenly reversed his conduct and for some reason continued to make advances only on Lydia.

It seemed that he had completely settled his past and was now happily engaged.

Lydia had no means of confirming this, but had decided to trust him for the time being.

At the very least, Edgar was always demonstrating his love, going to extremes that bewildered Lydia.

Although they were about to be married, the more they were alone together, the more Lydia felt that she ought to be careful about acting improperly, due to the excessive skinship\*.

That being said, even though there was a difference in the degree of their expressions of love, for now they were most certainly a happy pair of lovers.

“I’ll also be going to Scotland next week. Even though we won’t be able to meet for a little while, you’ll be able to endure it right?”

“I’ll be just fine.”

“I’d like it if you felt just a little bit lonely though.”

“Ah....I’m sorry.”

She still wasn’t used to conversing like lovers. Even so, Edgar smiled as if he was having fun.

Lydia was about to return to her hometown in Scotland with her father. It was in order to visit her mother’s grave and report the engagement to her. Edgar said he wanted to do so, and the trip was hurriedly planned, but due to circumstances, he ended up having to leave a little later.

Due to this, Edgar was in the position to see Lydia and her father off today. Even though he said that they would be apart for only a few days, he suddenly seemed very reluctant to part.

“.....By the way, I wonder what happened to Lota. She said she would come to see me off.”

Feeling embarrassed by Edgar’s long, steady gaze on her, Lydia quickly averted her eyes, and the conversation, elsewhere.

“She can’t come today. It’s because a large rebellion against her Grandfather was uncovered in the East End\*.”

“Don’t tell me, you were the one that uncovered it?”

Edgar shrugged his shoulders.

“Since we won’t be able to meet for awhile, I just didn’t want this precious time to be interrupted.”

Even as she grew tired of it, Lydia had already accepted Edgar’s unbelievable ways.

“We’ll meet again soon.”

“You won’t forget about me, right?”

That’s true, something like that had happened before.

Once, when Lydia left Edgar and returned to Scotland, Kelpie cast magic that made her unable to remember her engagement to Edgar.

“It’ll be alright. Please don’t worry.”

Kelpie — speaking of which, he seemed to be appearing in front of Lydia even less compared to before. She thought that he would follow them to Scotland this time too, but he disappeared off somewhere, saying he had business to attend to.

Ever since she became engaged, her surroundings, and Lydia herself, were changing little by little.

“If I could, I want to board this ship and leave just like this together with you.”

“But, you have important business to attend to, right?”

Of course, it was the same for Edgar too.

In preparation for marriage, Edgar was thinking that as the head of the Ashenbert family, he needed to strengthen his standing as an earl even more. The title he held was Earl of Ibrazel and it was a lineage that had endured since the Middle Ages. Due to this history, it had a pretty high rank amongst England’s aristocracy. However, since the position was left unoccupied in Great Britain for 300 years and Edgar himself was quite young, with no relatives nor backers amongst the aristocracy, there were inconveniences as well.

When he appeared in society, he garnered much attention as a flashy and attractive earl, but that wasn’t enough in order to restore the family name. It was also necessary to have a track record within Great Britain.

For that reason, even though he was going to socialize with some nobles this time, it seemed that it wasn’t just to play around with his friends or some ladies.

“There’s nothing that’s more important than you. Ah, that’s right, that’s why, if you said that you don’t want to be apart for even a moment.....”

“Edgar, I won’t say such a selfish thing so rest assured.”

“You don’t understand. In the whole world, only you can make me do your bidding at any time.”

Even lines like this were ordinary for him. Even though Lydia knew she should think of it as mere flattery, this time she suddenly felt as if he was also being

serious.

“I won’t do things like forget you, so please don’t worry.”

“Even if someone over there tries to court you, you’ll properly reject them, right?”

“There’s no way something like that would happen.”

“You mustn’t get caught by a man who only pays you lip-service.”

I already have though — is what Lydia wanted to say, but she swallowed these words.

“I know that I’m completely unpopular within my hometown, so much so that I feel dejected.”

“You’re wrong, Lydia. From now on, the ones that will feel dejected are all the men in town. They’ll definitely realize that a wonderful woman was taken away by an outsider.”

If she continued to listen to his endless sweet talking, she would actually miss the ship.

Finding a short pause, Lydia tried to definitely board the ship this time when she caught a glimpse of the young man who acted as a valet standing behind Edgar. Since a while ago, the dark skinned boy named Raven was looking around the surroundings many times. Thinking that it seemed like he was looking for someone, Edgar suddenly had an idea and said,

“By the way, I don’t see Nico anywhere?”

“Yes....he was deep in conversation with some fairies he knew, but I wonder if he’s boarded the ship already.”

The fairy cat named Nico was Lydia’s childhood friend and also her partner when she worked as a fairy doctor.

He was impudent, capricious, and always doing as he pleased, but he was surprisingly compassionate at times too.

That Nico had been getting along well with Raven nowadays. Even so, Raven might have thought that boarding the ship without saying anything was rather cold-hearted.

“Ah, that’s right, Raven, Nico said to give you his regards.”

I wonder if that sounded forced.

Lydia gave a deceiving smile but Raven, who was normally expressionless, simply murmured “Is that so?”, and she was unable to tell whether he was

pleased or angry.

Even so, Raven, who hadn't opened up his heart to anyone but Edgar until now, seemed to think of Nico as a friend. Having been informed of this by Edgar, Lydia, who thought that it would be undesirable for Raven's developing emotions to regress, became irritated with Nico's cold-hearted attitude.

Nico became friends with anyone depending on his mood at the moment but with fairies, even if you did them an injustice, they wouldn't notice. That's why, for Nico's sake as well, Lydia had to take care that Raven did not get hurt.

"Well then, Raven, we'll meet again in Scotland. Please keep Nico company for me at that time too."

The sailor's bell rang in a more hurried manner. Along with the sailors' shouts, it urged passengers to board quickly.

"Heeeeey, Lydia! If you don't come quickly, the ship will leave—!"

Nico's voice rang out. With fish that he probably received from the harbor fairies in both hands, he rushed over on his hind legs. It was fortunate that by mixing in with the rushing crowd of people, no one noticed the presence of a strange cat, but all the same, Lydia felt nervous.

"Oh, Raven, good timing. I'll give you one of these."

After closely inspecting the fish that hung from both arms, he flung the smaller one at Raven. Whether Raven felt happy at receiving raw fish or not, Lydia couldn't even begin to guess.

"Lydia, be careful."

Once more, Lydia received a kiss from Edgar on her fingertips, and feeling slightly ceremonious, gave a light curtsy.

I wonder if, as a lady about to marry into nobility, I'm able to act the part just a little bit.

Edgar also answered with a formal bow while smiling, then began to wave. While feeling somewhat embarrassed, Lydia scooped Nico into her arms, then hurried towards the ship.

\* \* \*

When the long summer sunshine finally began to disappear, Edgar headed towards a certain pub near Charing Cross.

Passing by the entrance through which lively voices audibly leaked out, he climbed up a set of stairs adjacent to the building. This was the entrance dedicated for use by the upper class.

From downstairs, the creaking of floorboards and the clapping of hands along with sounds of dancing rang out. Removed from this boisterous merrymaking, this floor had a long haired carpet that erased the sounds of footsteps and muffled the gentlemen's conversations.

Edgar surveyed his surroundings, looking this way and that for a familiar face. From a seat deep within, a middle aged man stood up.

"Lord Ashenbert, over here."

The one beckoning him was Duke Glen. He was an influential aristocrat that Edgar had recently started to become close with.

After exchanging greetings, the Duke introduced Edgar to the other man he was sitting with.

Introduced as Connaught, the leader of an influential clan of the Highlands, the man seemed tough despite his small build.

"It's an honor to meet you, Earl."

"The pleasure is mine, Mr. Connaught."

The Highlands was a region in Scotland that was made up of the mountain districts and the Western Isles, and had its own language and culture. For that reason, there had been some opposition towards England's royal family, but now it was part of the United Kingdom.

That being said, it was difficult for Edgar to understand anything about the Highlands. In order for an outsider to learn about the region, they needed to be acquainted with a master of the region at the very least.

For Edgar, it was necessary to know about the Highlands.

He knew that Lydia's late mother had left the McKeel clan, a clan of the Hebrides archipelago, and on top of that, a person of the McKeel clan had said that it was decided before Lydia was born that she would be the fiancée of the next clan head. Due to this, he decided to get himself involved with the clan's matters.

Edgar had thought that he absolutely must not make enemies of the McKeel clan so in this manner, he met with the head of another clan first.

"By the way, Lord Ashenbert, you're interested in the development of the

Highlands, is that right?"

After chatting for awhile, the Duke cut it off.

"Yes, well, investing into a new industry would be good, but I was thinking that I wanted to try doing other things as well."

"Hoh, for example?"

"Just increasing my assets has no meaning. Thinking long term, if I were to make a significant investment towards the development of Great Britain, then the Highlands would still remain untouched as a land with much potential."

The Duke smiled and nodded his head in agreement.

"It was for this reason, Mr. Connaught, that I introduced Lord Ashenbert to you."

Even if his round face expressed an amicable smile, as expected of the head of the Connaught clan, his eyes were sharp. While from under his heavy eyelids his eyes directly took stock of Edgar, he said what had probably been on his mind since the beginning.

"You're extremely young, yet you have such sturdy plans."

"What, there's nothing to worry about. He's the current head from a prestigious family of earls and he's already invested in a number of businesses and found success. Unlike those nobles who can't even keep track of the income and expenditures of their territories, he's an extremely ambitious young man."

"Since my father passed away early, I've had no choice but to protect the family name with my own efforts."

As Edgar said this cheerfully, Mr. Connaught scratched his head as if ashamed.

"Forgive my rudeness. I see, so we only have Duke Glen's expectations. Then let me say this frankly. Our family is experiencing extreme poverty. Of course, it's not just the Connaught clan, but many other clans have become unable to sustain themselves....."

"I had heard that crop failures were continuing in the Highlands, but is it really that severe?"

"It's particularly bad towards the islands where those who were unwilling to give up their land have started to die out. On top of this, acquisition of the land by outsiders continues to progress, so many are driven out from their family lands before they have a chance to renew their lifestyle."

It seemed that as the head of the clan, he came to London seeking financial

assistance.

When Edgar heard of this from Duke Glen, he thought that there was no disadvantage in making the Connaught clan indebted to him. Much like the McKeel clan, they possessed an extensive amount of land throughout the Hebrides.

From hereafter, they could probably be helpful to Edgar.

“Mr. Connaught, is there any merit to me investing in your clan?”

“Shall we have a talk about the finer details?”

He said that while leaning forward in excitement.

“Do you want to make an influential clan of the Highlands your ally? Is it your intention to crush the McKeel clan?”

After the Duke and Mr. Connaught had left and Edgar sat deep in thought alone while gazing at his glass of Scotch, a familiar voice called out to him.

While masking the resentment that sprouted in an instant, Edgar raised his head.

“It’s been awhile hasn’t it, Lord. ....no, Your Highness”

A young man, young enough to be teenager, put his hand to his chest and gave a forced bow of his head.

Ulysses Barlow. He was a member of the secret organization that Edgar went up against, and a close aide of their leader, “Prince”.

Prince had only just recently died in front of Edgar’s eyes. However, Prince was merely the product of a process akin to black magic, and was the key to preserving the organization. The memories of Prince still lived on.

And now, they were inside of Edgar.

Prince, who was a descendant of the royal family that was driven out of Great Britain, kidnapped a young Edgar, who was the eldest son of a noble family that happened to have ties to the same lineage, in order to make him his successor. After escaping by his own power, Edgar fought back against the organization that was chasing him. However, even though Prince died, Edgar ended up taking over his memories, and thus, nothing had truly ended.

Therefore Ulysses, ignoring the fact that he once thought of Edgar as a traitor, now treated him as his master.

“This place is supposed to be used only by members of higher society though?”

Edgar said this with as much displeasure as possible.

“I hadn’t realized.”

Ulysses wasn’t bothered at all.

“I have some information relating to the Prophet of the McKeel clan.”

“I don’t want to hear it. Disappear.”

“The Prophet exists in order to defy the magical power of the Unseelie Court.

Even we couldn’t have predicted that such a person existed but, should he awaken, he’ll likely try to erase you eventually.”

“Can you not hear me?”

“However, sealing him away is not simple. We also, once, had some measures in place. For example, if we were able to borrow the power of the Goddess of War Macha.....however we are unable to revive Macha. In addition, we also lost a Nightmare.”

Of course, Edgar was the cause of this. That’s why, even though Ulysses kept up a polite attitude, his inner frustration was unmistakable. He continued speaking while ignoring Edgar.

“With nothing but Prince’s power, in other words Your Highness, with the magical powers and ability to deal with the Unseelie Court that you have within you, along with the Merrow’s Sword, there’s already no other way but to use these.”

“This matter is irrelevant to your circumstances. I’ll do as I please when it comes to dealing with the Prophet.”

“Is it your idea to crush the McKeel clan, so that no one will be able to awaken the Prophet? But I wonder if you’ll make it in time. The next chance to awaken the Prophet is on the day of the next full moon. Once every nineteen years, during the summer when the moon descends upon southernmost point, the entrance to the Holy Land is opened. Until that day, all the members of the McKeel clan must be doing all that they possibly can. They’ll obviously try to make your fiancée the Prophet’s fiancée by any means necessary.”

“Didn’t I already tell you to disappear!?”

“In order to bury the Prophet, that day is also our chance. In the case that the entrance to the Holy Land opens, please deal with him before he awakens. Since you’re not yet a complete “Prince”, I believe that it will be very difficult for you to win with an awakened Prophet as your opponent.”

The contents of the glass were flung at Ulysses.

Although the customers of the pub looked towards them, Edgar paid them no heed and took hold of Ulysses' damp head with both hands in a tight grip.

The boy's hair became disheveled, exposing the scar of his damaged ear. It was something that Edgar had ordered his attendant, Raven, to do some time ago. "Since you can't seem to hear anyway, should I rip your remaining ear to shreds too?"

When Edgar started putting force into the hand gripping the ear, as expected Ulysses grimaced in pain. However, he raised the corners of his lips and grinned. Even though Edgar was scowling in his general direction, his eyes contained a trace of fear and were trying not to look directly at him. From where his nails dug into his ear, a single stream of blood flowed down his cheek. Although he must have felt fear from that pain, Ulysses still tried to show a grin.

"What's so funny?"

"....I see, it's just as the previous Prince anticipated; you are magnificent to an annoying extent. Frightening, such that even we have no choice but to be afraid, we've been searching for an absolute master. Because if we don't, then our greatest wish won't be granted, of course."

As he was thrust away with full force, Ulysses crashed into a nearby chair and got tangled up in a tablecloth before collapsing to the floor.

Edgar turned to leave the noisy store interior.

"The exact whereabouts of the Holy Land, if it's Prince then he definitely knows. If you save yourself the hassle of searching, then you'll definitely make it in time for the full moon."

The voice he heard just as he was on verge of leaving the store stayed in his ears forever.

\* \* \*

In a town in Scotland, not too far from Edinburgh, was the place where Lydia was raised.

If one looked down the main street, if it can be called that since it was barely a dozen yards in length, one would see residences scattered alongside it with fields and orchards spreading out beyond their gardens.

In this tranquil place, a residence was set up for the Carlton family, but since Lydia's grandparents had passed away and she had also left this house with her father when he took up his teaching job at London University, it hadn't been their family home for awhile.

After airing out the house and unpacking their luggage, Lydia sat around the table with her father and Nico, and the three of them had a late supper. While relaxing at the dining table lit by candlelight, Lydia aimlessly looked around the familiar dining room.

When she was a child, her mother sat next to her. Across from them was her grandmother. As she thought this, she felt the passage of time.

"Lydia, for you, the time spent in this house may now be your last," said her father solemnly.

I wonder if that's true. In accordance with Edgar's wishes to hold the ceremony as soon as possible, once she finished reporting the news to her mother's grave, she would return to London and get married. The fact that she was getting married still hadn't quite hit Lydia yet, but her feelings of wanting to stay by Edgar's side had become certain.

"But, even after I get married, I'll still come home from time to time at least."

"It seems as if the Earl won't part from you so easily though."

"It's not like that. He even said that since you'll be by yourself, I can come meet you whenever I want to."

"I have a very hard time believing things like verbal promises made before marriage."

Nico said, while stuffing his cheeks full of bacon.

"Speaking of which, Nico, it seems that a room for your personal use has been readied at the Earl's estate."

"Eh, Nico's also going to live at the Earl's residence?"

In a manner suggesting that this was completely unexpected, Lydia's father looked over at the grey cat who was skillfully using his knife and fork.

"What? Nico, were you going to stay at home with Father?"

Even Lydia was taken aback. Nico had been by her side since she was born. She had never doubted the idea that he would naturally be by her side from now on as well.

"Well.....I haven't decided yet, you see."

He answered hesitantly as if troubled, and wiped away gravy from his whiskers with a napkin.

Originally, he was a fairy that Lydia's mother had brought along with her when she left the island that was her birthplace. Although he had the appearance of a cat, because he was a free-willed fairy who didn't belong to anyone, there was no choice but to accept his decision concerning where he would live.

Although she thought there was no choice, Lydia once again felt that her surroundings were undergoing a great change, and a feeling of loneliness came over her.

Suddenly a strong wind blew, rattling the windows of the old house. Although it was summer, the nights were chilly. The curtains flew up and the lamp's flame flickered.

Lydia stood up and closed the window. Scotland's night sky, its wind, and the dense presence that isn't in London but is everywhere here; she vaguely remembered this uneasiness.

Something that wasn't of this world was strangely stirring up a fuss.

As she thought this, the doorbell rang.

"Oh? I wonder who it is at this hour."

"I feel a fairy's presence."

"But Nico, fairies don't come to visit by ringing the doorbell."

For this homecoming, a housemaid from London came along with them, and her footsteps could now be heard hurrying towards the entryway. A little while later, those footsteps approached the dining room. The housemaid that appeared was quite bewildered.

"Master, someone claiming to be your son has arrived."

"Huh? It can't be, it's not Edgar, is it?"

"Lydia, the Earl isn't my son yet."

Although Lydia's father had resigned himself and given his daughter permission to marry, he was sensitive to these distinctions and immediately corrected her. But, he became all the more bewildered.

"Professor, it's about time your illegitimate child came to light."

As Nico said that, Lydia's father gave a serious look of indignation.

"Wh-What are you saying? I only had my wife. Mrs. Cooper, please send these incomprehensible visitors away."

Nodding, the housekeeper turned to go back when at that time, a different voice cut in.

“Excuse me. Would it have been better if I had said ‘son-in-law’ instead?”  
Seemingly having entered without waiting to be received, a youth with long hair stood in the doorway. His luxurious wavy hair sparkled orange in the glow of the lamp, but in the shadows it also looked dark red. While he wore ordinary clothes, he gave the impression of coming from another world. Even so, he smiled cordially.

“Ahh, but, even that’s not quite right. But well, it’s a pain, so please allow me to call you Father.”

“.....a pain? .....therefore ‘Father’.....?”

Lydia’s father seemed unable to make sense of anything, and just stared dumbfounded at him.

The youth just continued to smile and started to step towards Lydia.

“Well, and you must be my little sister, right?”

“Wait a minute, who are you?”

“Your elder brother.”

That’s not the answer.

“I don’t have an elder brother.”

“It’s understandable that you wouldn’t know. I’m Aurora’s illegitimate child....”

\*clink\* Lydia’s father’s fork fell.

“There’s, there’s no way that’s true!”

“It was just a joke though.”

It wasn’t funny.

As one would expect, Lydia’s father stood up in indignation.

“Did you come just to tease my family? Would you mind leaving at once?”

“I didn’t come with that intention. I wanted to talk about circumstances from now on.”

“That’s enough.”

“Don’t you want to hear? Lydia, how about you? Well, no matter how you answer, I would really like for you to listen.”

Even if he left like this, it was true that she had become curious about just who this person was.

“Ummm, well....hey Father, it seems that he has some circumstances. He even

knows Mother's name."

Her father heaved a deep sigh.

"In any case, Lydia, it seems that he has business with you. Please let me excuse myself."

Saying so, he left the dining room.

Seeing him off, the "son" shrugged his shoulders and sat down in Lydia's father's seat. He stared at Lydia and gave a smile of satisfaction.

"You'll listen right, to my story?"

"But, you aren't making the slightest bit of sense. If you aren't Mother's illegitimate child then...."

"You, you're half-fairy right? Although you have a body of flesh like a human's, your soul has the strong presence of a fairy's."

He turned to look at Nico who had just said these words.

Unsurprised that a cat had just spoken, he casually replied, "That's exactly right."

"Half-fairy? Is that true?"

"Lydia, you are also the same. However, while living in the human world, you seem to have assimilated with the humans quite well huh. Yeah, you look completely human."

"Um, Mr. ...."

"Wouldn't you please call me big brother Brian?"

The man who seemed to be called Brian turned his eyes imploringly to her.

"Until you were taken to the human world as a changeling, you used to call me that. You probably don't remember though."

Changeling.

"Y-You're saying that I was a changeling?"

"That's right. We were born from the same parents."

Since she was a child, Lydia had heard the whispered gossip that she didn't resemble her parents. This, coupled with her reputation as the strange girl who could see fairies, made the children around her tease her by calling her a changeling.

However both her mother and her father obstinately denied the rumors that she was a changeling.

".....Please don't tell lies. I'm the Carlton family's, Father and Mother's

daughter."

Ever since she was a child, Lydia had always worried about where her true place was. However, recently, she had heard that her mother was a changeling. It seemed that her mother's relatives, the McKeel clan, had dealings with a fairy tribe where in exchange for continuing the practice of changelings, magical power would continue to get passed down within the clan.

Intending to cause a stir about this rule of the clan, her mother eloped with her father and left the island.

Knowing all this, it seemed even more so that Lydia mustn't believe things such as her being a changeling.

"Well, you being my little sister is the truth."

Nonetheless, Brian made this assertion. Getting up from his seat, he started to talk in order to persuade Lydia while slowing crossing the room.

"You were exchanged with Aurora's daughter. At that time you were too young, so it was hard for me to imagine what you would be like as an adult, but now that you're here right in front of my eyes, I know with certainty that you are my little sister. You've become more beautiful than in my imagination but, there's no mistake. There are traces remaining."

"If that's so, then the real daughter of the Carlton family should be at your house in the fairy world, right? Take me there. Until I meet her I won't believe you!"

"That's impossible."

"See? You're spouting nonsense after all."

"Because she died. It was when she was still very young, you see. That's why I have always spent my time thinking about my little sister who was in the human world."

Died?

Mother and Father's real daughter may no longer be anywhere anymore?

Thinking of this, Lydia began to acquire feelings of guilt.

She felt as if she was deceiving both her father, who while feeling lonely was also joyful about her marriage, and Edgar, who believed he was accepting the true daughter of the Carlton family as his wife.

"So, what did you want to do once you met your little sister?"

Nico, who had be closely watching the course of events, quietly asked this

question instead of Lydia, who had become completely silent.

“Nothing in particular. I just wanted to see her. .....The family we have blood ties to, the McKeel clan, used to live on the surface after separating from the fairy tribe, but since the Unseelie Court fairies on the island have increased it became difficult to live here. On the next day of the full moon, the special day on which the path to the heavens opens up, we plan to leave this island.”

“The heavens? You, what kind of fairy tribe were you originally?”

“Philis Chyris.”

Philis Chyris, the Aurora Fairies. They were those who danced in the night sky, the dancers of light.

Mother was a descendant of that fairy tribe. Lydia too, whether she was a changeling or not, was a descendant of Philis Chyris to some extent.

Brian looked at Lydia with gentle eyes. As if he was truly looking at his younger sister, his eyes were filled with affection and nostalgia.

“Even though I’m descended from humans, once I leave this island and part from the human world, I’ll be able to live completely as a fairy. Before that, I wanted to meet my little sister.”

When he said this so solemnly, Lydia’s heart wavered.

“That’s why, I’m begging you. Before the day I leave the human world, won’t you please spend some time with your big brother?”

“But I’m.....”

“It’s okay if you don’t believe my story. It’s okay if we even just pretend to be siblings. I just don’t want to forget that I had a little sister.”

If one were to live as a fairy, then familial bonds like those of humans begin to fade. Even the feelings one had for their family, along with their memories of the surface, will certainly fade away.

Half fairy, but also half human. It was hard to guess what a person like this was feeling, but coupled with the idea that while she was being raised as a human, her mother had known that her real parents were in the fairy world, was a feeling that Lydia could not forsake him.

“.....As long as you don’t tell Father about me being a changeling.”

In the end, Lydia ended up saying that.

“I understand. I promise.”

“I wonder if this is going to be okay,” Nico muttered in disbelief, while

enthusiastically licking sauce out of a spoon.

After finishing dinner, Lydia knocked at her father's door. When she gently opened the door, the figure of her father, sitting in a chair by the window and gazing outside into the distance instead of at his open books, came into view. "Father, ....that person only wanted to experience what a human family was like, is all."

She went to his side and squatted beside him, taking his hand into hers. "Mother's real parents were relatives of a tribe in the fairy world. As members of the McKeel clan, they were people who had their human blood mixed with fairy blood. That's why, since we're relatives, he called me his little sister. Amongst them, they have no distinctions like that of cousins."

Lydia explained while deceiving him.

However, just by hearing about Mother's relatives, there's no certainty that he won't be reminded of changelings.

It might be that he remembered this when the young man suddenly appeared, calling Lydia his little sister, and that's why he left his seat in the dining room. Whether Lydia was a changeling or not, probably even her father didn't know the truth. That's why, there was no doubt that he didn't want to hear talk that would negate his feelings of wanting to believe.

"Because he was only ignorant of human common sense, he didn't mean to insult Mother. He also didn't mean to hurt Father....."

Slowly, her father's gaze returned from beyond the window, and his face had a calm look.

"Lydia, you don't have to worry. I was just remembering a little about your mother. After many months have passed, rather than feeling lonely or sad, whenever I remember her it feels like I'm talking to her after a long time."

"Then, I wonder if I interrupted your conversation with Mother."

As Lydia smiled, her father also smiled fondly at her and gently stroked her head. Just like when she was a child, Lydia placed her head on her father's lap.

"When fairies are involved, I'm powerless. I thought that it can't be helped. All I could do was accept that my wife had fairy blood in her and look after her."

"Mother was definitely grateful to Father, who did all that for her. That's why she also told me that it was fine for me to take pride in my ability to see fairies.

She said that it was because a person who accepted me for who I am would definitely appear someday.”

“Ahh, but the Earl is pretty different from me. I was too much of a bystander. I wasn’t able to do anything to help Aurora.”

What exactly was he was talking about, Lydia wasn’t able to understand well. Perhaps he meant that Lydia’s mother always had no choice but to deal with fairies on her own.

“The Earl is choosing to get involved with fairies. It’s not that this can’t be thought of as reckless but.....by just being different from me, I expect that he will be a good partner for you.”

Speaking of which, Edgar had even been trying to get involved in fairy matters. One way or another he had gone as far as entering the fairy world, and seriously fighting against fairies who could use magic.

Although he didn’t have mental prowess like Father, unlike Father, he was in a position where he couldn’t avoid dealing with fairies.

Just with that, Lydia might be able to learn skills as a fairy doctor beyond even her mother’s capabilities. Because if she married the man who held the title ‘Earl of Ibrazel,’ then she would definitely become the Lady of the fairyland. I wonder if I can become one.

The wedding was already decided. However there was still a slight uneasiness.

“Aren’t you cold?”

Her father asked her, worried about the wide open window.

“No, I’m fine.”

Her father slowly started to tell her another story.

“You know, when you were born, your mother seemed truly happy. ‘She’ll definitely grow up into a healthy and beautiful woman,’ she said.”

“I’m healthy, but I wonder about the beautiful part.”

“Lydia, we were always worrying about how to keep our elopement from causing you pain.”

“There’s no way I felt hurt by that.”

“.....If that’s so, then it’s alright. However, it was because I tend to be unreliable as a father.”

“Not at all, because Father, you’ve always tried to understand me.”

Although she came with the intention to comfort her father, in actuality, she

might have come and snuggled close to her father in search of something that could deny her worries about being a changeling.

Her father had probably noticed something like that.

The existence of the fairy tribe on her mother's side of the family was definite proof that her mother was a changeling. That's why he would notice that Lydia might also become insecure.

"Thank you, Father."

The girl murmured, while believing in her mother and father, who were more definite blood relatives to her than some brother who suddenly appeared.

\* \* \*

".....What is the matter, Earl?"

Edgar was brought back into the present by the sound of Paul's voice.

While listening to his story, he suddenly fell into deep thought, and seemed to be spacing out.

"Ahh, excuse me. What was it again?"

"Yes, um, it's been 2 weeks since those two from the McKeel clan have departed London, but they don't seem to be especially moving differently compared to the rest of the clan."

A little while ago, from the McKeel clan that lives in the Hebrides archipelago in the Highlands, the son of the clan chief and a man claiming to be a fairy doctor appeared in London.

They had come to search for the daughter of Aurora, who was a descendant of a fairy tribe.

Although they had come to find Lydia, once they learned of her engagement to Edgar and as a result of being thoroughly threatened, the two of them returned back to the island.

Just in case, Edgar had ordered an association of his comrades to pay close attention to the association of London residents affiliated with the McKeel clan, but Paul came to report that there seemed to be no reason to worry.

Was it okay to think that the McKeel clan had already given up on Lydia?

In the parlor of the Ashenbert residence, with the painter Paul right in before his eyes, Edgar brooded.

The next full moon was the problem. In order to solve the problems of famine and illness that had spread about their island, the “sleeping Prophet”, said to be their savior, had to be woken up. For this reason, it was necessary to have a young maiden descended both from the McKeel clan and the fairy tribe but, there was already no one else but Lydia. Furthermore, this particular full moon only happened once in nineteen years.

Would they really give up so easily?

He must be on guard. According to their attitude, Edgar might also have to put up some strong measures. However, these were already Edgar’s personal circumstances.

It seemed that, just as he feared, there was some sort of antagonism between the McKeel clan’s Prophet and Prince’s organization. That’s why Ulysses was getting involved with the McKeel clan’s movements. He was trying to incite Edgar into burying the Prophet.

Since he didn’t want to let go of Lydia, Edgar intended to do just that. However, at the same time, Ulysses, who was definitely an enemy, would benefit. This, could then be a betrayal to Paul and that association, the “Scarlet Moon”, who fought in order to eradicate Prince.

“I understand. Let’s stop with the surveillance. After that, Paul, I think I’d like to quit being the leader of the Scarlet Moon soon. After all, Prince has died, and I don’t think there is any necessity to me being the leader anymore.”

“But Earl, if everything hasn’t truly ended, then you might be targeted again....”

In order to interrupt the words of a worried Paul, Edgar stood up.

“Please let everyone know. Regarding remnants of Prince, if you guys are worried then it’s fine to continue investigating, however, you have no duty to report to me.”

“Um, Earl, do you also already have no use for me? Not as a member of Scarlet Moon but.....”

“What are you saying, aren’t you already a friend? Just as you have until now, it’s fine for you to come visit whenever, because I’m sure Lydia also feels the same way.”

“Okay.....”

While saying so, Paul wore a look as if he couldn’t quite accept the outcome, and gazed over at the Earl with a look of loneliness.

"I'm sorry, but I have some business to attend to now so you'll have to excuse me. Ahh, but please take your time here and drink some tea."

Even after he exited the room, he could feel Paul's sad gaze on his back and felt pained.

Paul had noticed that Edgar was carrying some burden all by himself. Perhaps he had also perceived that Edgar cut his ties with the organization called "Scarlet Moon" in order to act on his own. That's exactly why Paul had wondered whether he could lend his strength, even as an individual. While he felt grateful, Edgar also thought that that would be inexcusable.

Above all else, Edgar didn't want to lose Lydia. In order for that, even he didn't know himself what sort of acts he had to commit. Furthermore, since Paul was a friend, he thought that he definitely couldn't allow Paul to get mixed up in this any further.

After leaving the parlor, Edgar entered his study and before long, Raven appeared. From this point forward, only Raven would be fighting alongside him, so he should be glad at his good fortune that he wouldn't be all alone. While thinking this, Edgar wordlessly nodded.

After checking the hallway and closing the door, Raven entered the study.

"I've obtained a map of the Hebrides archipelago."

He spread the map out on top of the table.

"The McKeel clan's lands are on this island here in the Outer Hebrides."

"So they occupy more than half of the island. I heard that where Lydia's mother used to be was in the northernmost village. So that means, somewhere in this area must be where the Prophet is sleeping, the Holy Land."

The Hebrides archipelago, located in the northwestern part of the Highlands, was said to have around five hundred islands of various sizes. Which clans owned which islands was noted in great detail on the map, but the place in question was even farther, such that it could be said to be located at the end of the earth. But of course, one wouldn't know the exact location of the Holy Land with just a map. Most likely there weren't any paths in the area.

Ulysses had said that if it were Prince then he would know.

Would he have to make contact with Prince's memories again?

"What is this blank piece of land? If it doesn't belong to any clan, then I wonder

if that means an outsider purchased it?"

"Most likely. This map is at least ten years old, so the buyout has most certainly progressed by now."

The village of Lydia's mother was also said to have had a lot of people that left or died. Edgar knit his brows.

"I wonder if there's any relation between outsiders buying up the islands and the ominous magic enveloping the islands that those two from the McKeel clan mentioned."

"Who can say? I get the feeling that the theft of the islands is just the situation brought about by human selfishness. However, the fact that a great many landowners have had no choice but to sell their land is probably due to the effects of the famine brought about by crop failure, and the bad things piling up might be, as the McKeel clan believes, due to the influence of some wicked magic."

Edgar thought that the Prophet is meant to defy that magic, and yet he must prevent him from waking up.

As long as those guys were fixated on Lydia, and as long as the Prophet was an existence that threatened Edgar's life, then there was naturally no other choice but to regard the Prophet as an enemy. He sympathized with the McKeel clan's misfortune, but he wasn't going to be a victim for their sake.

"Raven, we must go to the Hebrides before the next full moon."

"Understood. But how is the next full moon special?"

"I looked it up. Nineteen years....or more accurately, once every eighteen years and six months, it comes around. The movement of the moon brings it to the position where it's the closest to the horizon, then it sinks with the southern wind. That's the kind of day it seems to be."

Therefore, even if you ask "how", Edgar didn't know very well himself. Raven also tilted his head in confusion, but it seemed to be essential to the Prophet.

"Before that, we have to go to Lydia's hometown. Please make the necessary preparations."

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[1] Skinship — A term used by the Japanese to describe bonding and intimacy through physical contact. Stuff like holding hands, hugging, basically instances

where skin touches skin (with the exception of sexual activity).

**[2] East End** — The term used here (下町) translates directly to “low lying part of a city” or the part of the city which is mostly made up of the working class. Given the setting, this seemed to mean the East End of London and felt like a more natural translation.

# Chapter 2: Fiancé and Brother

Soon after a week, abiding by the terms of the arrangement, Edgar came to Scotland.

Lydia noticed the sound of the carriage stopping in front of the main gate. She looked out of the window, then immediately turned and ran towards the entrance.

She arrived outside the door, passing through the courtyard.

Edgar stood by the entrance, beside what was actually a simple wooden door. He saw her and smiled, holding his arms out.

*Oh, what should I do? Should I hug him?*

Lydia's footsteps came to a halt as she thought about it. Obviously it was only a natural action upon reuniting with a lover, but she still felt the usual self-consciousness, and strengthened her defensive heart.

Perhaps being fully used to her response, Edgar strode towards Lydia, who stopped a few steps away, not knowing what ought to be done, and then embraced her without hesitation.

“Just when I thought you would come running into my arms.”

Lydia heaved a sigh of relief.

She always acted awkward and clumsy, but luckily Edgar fully accepted her like this.

Recently, Lydia had even thought that perhaps she was lucky that Edgar was an unrestrained philanderer.

“Lydia, I really wanted to see you.”

“Yes, well...”

“You too? Did you want to see me too? How much did you want to see me?”

“Uh, well...”

“Would you think about me several times a day? Did you say “good night” each night in the direction of London? Have I appeared in your dreams?”

Still, a little restraint would be better.

“Lydia, let me take a good look at you.”

He smiled happily, touching Lydia's face with his hand. After a closer look at his glistening blond hair and ash-mauve eyes, she felt her heart bubble up with

unspeakable joy.

As she gave Edgar a frank smile, he gently narrowed his eyes and said:

“In the short time we were apart, you’ve become more beautiful.”

“Oh, no I haven’t changed.”

“No, you have changed. If you aren’t becoming more beautiful, then I’m a failure as a fiancé.”

“Wow, you two are quite close.”

Surprised by a sudden voice, Lydia panicked and quickly separated from Edgar. As if he had suddenly disturbed them, Brain laughed as he stood behind them. She had almost forgotten that currently, the Carlton house had a headache of a guest.

“Uh, Edgar, this person is...”

“You are Earl Ashenbert? So this is Lydia’s fiancé. The type is quite different from what I had imagined, do you seriously want to marry her?”

“Of course I’m serious. And who are you?”

Edgar turned to face him, using a slightly threatening tone to ask.

“Oh, my name is Brian, I’m Lydia’s older brother.”

“Older brother...? This is the first time I’ve heard of this.”

This was merely a matter of course, Lydia saw Edgar give her a perplexed look, as if to hoping that she would explain.

“Uh, Brian, that...”

“You should call me onii-sama. Didn’t I say that?”

“Lydia, what’s going on?”

“Well... something happened.”

“Yeah, to sum it up, we are going to be brother in laws. Pleased to meet you, Edgar.”

Saying Edgar’s name in an over familiar tone, he extended his hand. Refusing to shake hands with him, Edgar kept his hands tied behind his back and so Brain awkwardly shrugged.

“Even if you’re a noble, you shouldn’t look down on the fiancée’s family.”

“If you really were part of Lydia’s family, I would have greeted you properly.”

“Edgar! Uh, you must be tired from the long trip, come quickly into the house.”

Just when Lydia took Edgar’s arm to pull him away from Brian, the housekeeper’s voice came from inside the house.

“Miss, the biscuits will burn!”

“Oh no, I forgot! Um, Edgar, could you wait for me?”

“I can show him around the house instead.”

“Um, Brian... onii-sama could you..?”

Edgar and Brian exchanged a small smile, while appearing to be glaring at each other, thus Lydia was worried about whether or not she should have left them alone together.

“Let him show me around. You should hurry and go, I don’t want to miss the opportunity to eat the biscuits that you especially made.”

Since Edgar was also urging her, she had to comply.

“Then I’ll wait over by the room.”

Lydia hurried towards the entrance.

She anxiously turned around slightly, and saw Raven getting off the carriage, holding the luggage, and following closely behind Brian.

It was unusual to see a man with waist-length hair draped over his shoulders. Not only that, but under the few rays of sunlight shining through the clouds, Brian’s body looked as if it was faintly emitting light. Was this an illusion? *Is he..... human?* Edgar hesitated for a moment, and then went up the Carlton household’s stairs under Brian’s guidance.

“Is the professor not home?”

“He went out for a walk. Well, this is the guest room you’ll be using, and valet-kun’s room is on the first floor, so please wait and ask for Mrs. Cooper.”

Although the room wasn’t large, it was tidied very neatly.

Apparently his disposition wasn’t nasty enough to lead Edgar into something like a storage room, but in Edgar’s eyes, this man who was claiming to be Lydia’s brother was enough to make him feel irritated.

“The dining room is at the end of the corridor downstairs. Do you have any other questions?”

It also displeased Edgar that he acted like this place was his own home.

“Where is Lydia’s room?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Because I want to be able to find her in the middle of the night.”

Brian fell silent, speechless for a moment. Then he smirked and gave Edgar a friendly pat on the shoulder.

“It’s that room in front of the staircase.”

“Thank you, but that is the Professor’s room.”

Brian clicked his tongue, and Edgar quickly separated himself from him.

“Why weren’t you fooled?”

*What kind of idiot would have been deceived by a lie that was so easy to see through?*

“Your skepticism is quite heavy, were aristocrats educated to be like this? Or have you suffered misfortune?”

Edgar deliberately did not answer, but Brian casually asked again.

“Oh that’s right, Edgar, what is it that you like about Lydia? As her brother, I should be asking this, shouldn’t I? I want to know if you’re not a man who truly understands my sister, or else I won’t be able to approve. You understand, right?”

Going so far to consider himself as her older brother, there wasn’t anything more suspicious in comparison. Edgar was sure that he had ulterior motives. Still daring to disapprove of him, and the matters between him and Lydia, by no means did he need the interference of this youngster.

Edgar wanted to hurry up and get rid of him, so he turned to the path that he was already lead to, yet he remained in the room with Brian and said:

“If there’s anything, I’ll call you.”

After he finished speaking, he threw a coin, to which Brian promptly received, cocking his head to the side in confusion.

“What is this?”

“A tip.”

He thought for a moment, and after appearing to have understood the meaning, he clenched his fists and shouted angrily:

“Hey, I’m not a servant!”

“Oh, is that so? I forgot.”

“Wasn’t that on purpose!?”

“There’s a fool who would seriously forget things.”

“...You really are an horrid guy!”

“I could say the same to you.”

“I don’t think you’re suitable for Lydia!”

“Wait, please don’t fight!”

Lydia burst into the room, frantically intervening between Edgar and Brian.

“Lydia, I can’t acknowledge this kind of man as your fiancé!”

“Brian, at any rate, you should leave first.”

Lydia tried to push him out.

“You have to call me onii-sama!”

“I know that.”

“I also won’t acknowledge this guy as my brother in law.”

“Edgar, be quiet!”

After driving Brian out with great difficulty, Lydia heaved a sigh of relief. She felt quite worried; as expected, Edgar confronted the men who approached Lydia, and wouldn’t seem to treat them with any leniency.

And so he acted so childish in this odd place.

Lydia thought that at least the other man was claiming to be her “older brother”, so there was no need to be jealous.

Lydia gave Edgar a reproachful look, but he smiled like nothing had happened and walked towards the window.

“The view is really good, and it’s a very wonderful room.”

The room that Edgar was brought to was the best room of the Carlton house, but it still couldn’t compare to the mansion of a noble.

“The room is a little small, please bear with it.”

“No, there’s a wide view here, and it isn’t crowded like London.”

On the other side of the flat wheat fields, the hills could be seen. Lydia stood next to Edgar, overlooking the green hills covered with lush greenery.

As she did so, Lydia’s mood finally settled down, and began to actually feel that Edgar had arrived at this house.

She smiled naturally.

“On that hill, once it’s midnight, you can see fairies dancing in a circle. That fairy rath seems to be a relic from the past or something. There are many small fairies living there, and they will come out whenever it’s a quiet night with a clear atmosphere. When that happens, there are also many star like lights shining together, it’s very beautiful.”

Lydia regained her composure and found that Edgar wasn’t looking at the hill, but instead staring at her as she was talking.

“.....What is it?”

He shot an excessively passionate gaze at her, making her heart race. The wind blowing from the window had ruffled Lydia's hair, and so Edgar reached out a hand to comb through it.

"As long as fairies are mentioned, you seem to be most happy. It would be nice if I could see the world through your eyes."

"Even if it's invisible, it will be fine as long as you imagine it, that way, it's just like seeing it."

"I see... is the meaning the same? Then Lydia, from now on would you be willing to share the many stories about the fairies that you see with me?"

Just those words reminded Lydia that their time together would increase from now on, making her a little bashful.

"Alright."

His fingers played with the hair draped over Lydia's shoulders. Although she felt embarrassed, lately she had began to accept this, and did not hurriedly pull her hair back like before.

"By the way, what's going on with that older brother from just now?"

"Ah, I forgot to say... in fact Brian is a half-fairy, so then....."

Edgar listened to Lydia's explanation with a serious expression.

"In other words, he claims that he is your older brother by blood, and that you were a family member who was a changeling before coming to this family?"

"There is no evidence for it."

"You're not a changeling."

Lydia nodded while thinking.

"Of course I believe what Father and Mother said, that I am their real daughter, but..."

"You're convinced, yet you consider him as your brother?"

Lydia vaguely believed that perhaps Brian didn't know that his sister had died during his childhood. After all, regardless of whether she was his blood-related sister or a changeling, for him, he chose to believe that Lydia, who was still alive, was his sister.

He was both human and fairy, but did not belong on either side, so would he think that before he fully became an aurora fairy, he wanted to meet his sister living in the human world to confirm that he was part human?

The idea of being a changeling made Lydia feel uneasy. Brian may also have felt

uneasy about having ancestry on both sides.

“He’s like my mother, who was a McKeel family member born in the fairy realm, so he’s also considered to be my relative. However, he said he wanted to leave the human world. If he simply wants to experience the feeling of having a human family, then there’s no harm in me acting as his sister.”

Seeing Lydia once again being kind-hearted as usual, Edgar let out an exasperated sigh.

“I know. But Lydia, regardless of what anyone says, you belong in the human world. It was like this before, and it will be like this in the future.”

Lydia nodded, and Edgar pulled her closer, his lips coming close.

At that moment, the sound of coughing could be heard. Flustered, Lydia moved her head, looked over Edgar’s shoulder, and saw her father’s figure.

“Welcome, Earl.”

For a moment, Edgar revealed an expression of being bothered towards Lydia, but he immediately turned his head, grinning towards her father.

“Professor, I am in your care.”

“I apologize as I wasn’t able to come and greet you, I went out for a walk and relaxed until I lost track of time.”

“You can relax a bit again... no, please don’t mind, don’t say I’m a guest, but really, you can treat me like a son.”

“As long as he heads to the riverside, Father will pick up stones to the point of ecstasy.”

In order to cover up the embarrassment of nearly being kissed in front of Father, Lydia cut in and spoke.

“Yes, Earl, I apologize, you just arrived here, yet there’s a matter to trouble you with immediately. The host, Mr. Barrett is holding a ball tomorrow, and he said that he hoped to ask the Earl to attend...”

“Father, this is very sudden, haven’t you refused?”

Looking troubled, her father scratched his hair, which was already very messy.

“Well, as I was walking, I met Mr. Barrett, and he asked me once.”

Once Lydia returned to her hometown, the news that she was formerly engaged to a noble had spread all over the town in a day.

In the past, if it were not for Lydia and her father coming across special circumstances, they would not have been invited to the party. Therefore, it

wouldn't be hard for the Barrett family, who usually had connections with the Carlton family, to invite them. It's just that this time, they seemed to be very persistent.

"Since this is the countryside, they think the matter is worth congratulating and that everybody must celebrate together."

"Isn't that great? I don't mind."

Edgar shouldn't be bothered by the party. After he readily agreed, Lydia's father sighed in relief.

Perhaps he felt like it, since it was rare for Mr. Barrett to make such a strong request, he really could not refuse.

"Then, I will let the host know. Lydia, it's only natural that you have to attend."

"What! But, Father..."

Father knew that Lydia wasn't willing to attend, so he quickly left the room.

"Uh, Edgar, the townspeople want to get to know you, so I..."

"You weren't planning to go? That won't do, I want to see the disappointed men after seeing you being formally engaged."

*You wouldn't see those kinds of people.*

Lydia wanted to go to the banquet less and less, but her father and Edgar wouldn't approve.

"Well then, Lydia, let's go."

Edgar said brightly, as if wanting to end the subject of the banquet.

"What? Where are we going?"

"Well of course, I will be giving my respects to your mother. Since, we came for that purpose."

Despite having just arrived, Edgar showed no signs of fatigue as he took Lydia's hand.

Lydia's mother had been buried in the cemetery of the town's church. Although it was a cemetery, if one didn't notice the gravestones everywhere on the ground, it would probably be considered as an ordinary field.

There were several paths formed by trampled grass, seemingly like a maze, but Lydia correctly chose the path that ought to be followed.

Lydia carried some lavender that she had picked from the family garden in her arms. Whenever the lavender swayed, a refreshing fragrance was emitted.

"It's underneath that tree."

As she drew closer, she noticed something crouching in front of the tombstone. It was a fairy cat covered with soft, grey fur. Nico was hunched over, with his head appearing to be lowered.

He noticed the sound of their footsteps, and turned around to look in surprise.

“Oh, Earl, you’ve already arrived.”

“You also came, were we disturbing you?”

“No, I was just passing by.”

It didn’t look like he had just been passing by.

Lydia had never seen Nico come to Mother’s grave alone before, but after cautiously thinking, Nico was Mother’s friend in the past, thus it was impossible not to visit.

“Nico, if you were talking to Mother, we can come back a little later.”

“It doesn’t matter, it’s almost dessert time. I was just about to return.”

He yawned as he stood up, stretched his back, and began to walk away using his two hind legs.

“I heard that today’s dinner is haggis\*. Mrs. Cooper had an alarmed expression as she helped the cook prepare the dishes.”

“Well, I’ll be going on ahead.” Nico said, raising a paw. He was putting on the same airs as always, but his movements seemed very heavy.

If it was to eat desserts, then he would happily run back. Feeling worried, Lydia wondered what was troubling Nico.

Nico once said that he had not decided where he would stay after Lydia got married. Was he thinking about this?

Could it be that Nico wanted to stay on this land that her mother lay dormant in?

“What is haggis?”

Edgar asked Lydia, who was watching Nico leave.

“Eh, um... it’s Scotland’s famous cuisine.”

“Oh, is it a dreadful dish?”

“Who knows? Look forward to it.”

Lydia smiled at Edgar’s conflicted expression, and then moved towards the gravestone.

“*Here lies Aurora Carlton.*”

She placed the lavender bouquet before the stone that had these words.

Edgar took off his hat, closing his eyes as if he were in contemplation. The leaves rustled in the breeze, the grass swayed, tickling their feet, and tiny footprints left by fairies nearby sparkled like animal scales.

“Mother is giving us her blessing.”

The warm presence that surrounded this place as well as the both of them made Lydia feel this way.

Edgar raised his head and gazed at the tombstone with a serious expression.

“Mrs. Carlton... are you really willing to approve of me?”

Edgar was unable to hand Lydia over to the McKeel clan; this was equivalent to intending on disregard the crisis of Lydia’s mother’s clansmen.

This time, Edgar had proposed this trip because he had wanted to receive forgiveness.

If Lydia became the Prophet’s fiancée, the McKeel clan would be saved, but Edgar did not intend to comply at all; Lydia also understood that as long as she considered Edgar more important than anyone else, then she couldn’t sympathize with her mother’s clansmen.

Edgar had asked Lydia’s mother for approval of their marriage, but the issue’s genuine meaning wasn’t only this. In fact, it was more serious compared to what Lydia wanted, however she, without knowing anything, firmly believed that they already received blessings.

A soft wind blew, and sunlight shone faintly through the clouds.

Lydia noticed a shining object in the grass.

Noticing that it was not fairy footprints, but rather a hard object that reflected light, she bent down.

“What’s that? Did you drop it?”

Lydia held up the object and examined it; it was a glossy dark green stone, mixed with red spots. It was a bloodstone.\*

“Nico dropped it.”

Lydia knew that this polished spherical stone belonged to Nico.

“Oh, it’s Nico’s?”

“I heard that he got it from my mother, it must have originally been one of her belongings.”

For Nico, this ought to be like a remnant of Mother. He always put the stone in the gap of his tie and wore it close to his body.

If he was looking at the stone while standing at Mother's grave, he may have been immersed in deep sorrow at the time.

"This stone doesn't have a fastener attached, it doesn't seem to be an ornament. Could it be an amulet?"

"Well, regarding my mother, this could be considered a part of her. Here in Scotland, a bloodstone is believed to be a fragment of the Northern Lights that had fallen from the sky."

"Aurora from the Northern lights..... it's your mother's name."

The Northern Lights that fell to the ground. Mother was from the race which was born in this way.

The Aurora fairies in the Highlands used the Northern Lights as an alias. People took the sight of the flickering Northern Lights in the sky, which changed in color and shape, as Aurora fairies dancing in the night sky.

A bloodstone was said to be the Aurora fairies' blood, which was also their soul. Thus, Lydia could only speculate how her mother had felt cautiously collecting the stone and taking care of it.

Mother was a changeling of the McKeel family and Aurora fairies. After descending to live in the human world, for Mother, who wanted to live as a human, was she unable to sever her bonds?

"We should return it to Nico."

However, the reason why Mother gave the stone to Nico and not Lydia was perhaps because she felt that fairy objects should be given to fairies.

After all, Lydia's mother had hoped for Lydia to find happiness in her human identity, as the Carlton family's daughter.

As they left the cemetery, walking through the fields, Lydia realized that Edgar was holding her hand.

Compared to the proper way of a lady holding a man's arm as they walked, this way made her feel closer to Edgar.

It was like holding hands walking with parents as a child, and now, she and Edgar were doing the same thing. Once she thought this, warm feelings rushed into her heart.

Since childhood, Lydia was placed between the human and fairy worlds. She was unable to hold onto either sides, and also lacked some traits from both. But as long as she was together with Edgar, she felt that regardless of which

side she was surrounded by, she would be able to obtain happiness.

“One day, I will go to Ibrazel with you.”

Not knowing what was on Edgar’s mind as he abruptly said that, Lydia regarded these words as being in line with her feelings.

Regardless of whether it was the human or fairy world, she felt that one world revolved around them.

“...If I can continue being the Blue Knight Earl, one day I will be able to go.”

If he could continue being the Blue Knight Earl... Lydia felt that what he said was a little odd but her heart was full of happiness and was content, and so she was not bothered by this trivial matter.

\*

Nico sat on the slats of the fence, rested his chin on his paws and sighed. Although it was deep into the night, the sky was still faintly bright, and even the distant skyline was clearly visible.

Returning his gaze to the front, he could see ranks of goblins passing by his feet. Nico ignored the familiar fairies that spoke to him, and looked at the bloodstone on his lap, sighing once more.

During dinner, Lydia gave it to him, saying he had dropped it.

The stone originally belonged to Aurora, thus Nico had intended to return it to her. He didn’t expect it to be returned to his hands.

Nico thought it must be Aurora’s will.

“Aurora, do you mean you want me to continue to stay by Lydia’s side?”

Aurora had asked Nico to help take care of Lydia before she became independent.

The bloodstone would emit a light of an unspeakable and comfortable feelings, one that probably only a fairy could recognize. Because Nico really liked it, Aurora gave it to him. Although this in no way a response to Aurora’s request, whenever Nico looked at the stone, he would feel that with him being able to teach fairy matters to Lydia, whose mother had an untimely death, was done for Aurora.

Of course, he had been very happy watching Lydia grow up.

However, shouldn’t he more or less fulfill the promise he had made with Aurora?

Even though he thought this, he was gradually unable to make a decision. As he

was clearly worried, he placed the bloodstone by Aurora's side.

"Mr. Nico, the bread pudding still remains."

He turned around to see Raven lowering his head, looking his way.

"No thanks, I have no appetite today."

"Is that so? You ate three servings just now, so I thought you would like to eat it."

Raven never spoke sarcastically, he would only speak facts. Perhaps he wanted to cheer Nico up.

.....*Was that right?* Nico got a glimpse of Raven's expression, but the young attendant was always expressionless, thus it wasn't too clear as to what he was thinking.

"Hey, Raven, for how long do you intend to serve the Earl?"

"Until I die."

That was a stupid question.

Humans could spend a lifetime together, but that was impossible for a human and a fairy.

Nico sighed again.

At the same time, Raven seemed to have heard some activity and looked in the direction of the Carlton house.

Brian came out from the back door, walking to the darkest area of the plants, as if to hide himself, and headed towards somewhere.

"Where is he going this time?"

"I want to take a look at the situation."

Nico for some reason, followed behind Raven. For Nico, he was also concerned about the sudden appearance of Brian.

Although he said he wanted to see his sister, was it really only like that?

Besides, was Lydia really his sister?

Even if Brian was a half-fairy that had blood relations with the McKeel clan, other than in the case of changelings, they usually would never come into contact with humans and shouldn't be able to enter and exit the human world freely.

Since the McKeel clan wanted to contact the child that was brought to the fairy world as a changeling, they could only take advantage of the night that the moon descended closest to the south, which was once every nineteen years.

Raven eliminated the sound of his breathing and footsteps, shadowing Brian.

Brian passed through a hidden alley, walked into the woods, and finally stopped in front of a small pond.

Raven and Nico stopped immediately afterwards, hiding in the shadows of the trees. As the sky had finally started to darken, the woods were also quite dim, and they likely wouldn't have to worry about being discovered.

But it also meant that they couldn't see Brian's expression.

Regardless of Brian for the time being, the bigger issue was that they couldn't see the other person ahead.

From the silhouette, they were barely able to find out that the person was male, however, the age wasn't known. It was a thin and tall man.

Regardless, it seemed that Brian had come here to meet with this person.

The two of them began to speak, but because their voices were too quiet, Nico couldn't hear clearly.

"Raven, can you hear them?"

"Yes."

"What are they saying?"

"I do not know, it is not English."

"Could it be Gaelic? But that's a language from the Highlands... alright, I'll lean over a bit and eavesdrop some more."

"Please be careful."

After replying confidently that it wasn't a problem, Nico crept closer towards Brian on all fours.

Using fairy magic to hide would be futile against a half-fairy like Brian, so Nico could only hide himself physically. However, the visibility range surrounding the pond was too high, so he wasn't able to proceed much further.

Right! Nico suddenly thought of a way, then jumped up to the tree on the side, thinking to himself that by climbing up the tree, then following along the branches, he should be able to head right above them.

Nevertheless, jumping between the branches would make noise, thus Nico cautiously and softly ran across the branches.

He turned and glanced at Raven, who was looking back at him anxiously.

To signal that there was no problem, Nico waved and then continued to crawl slowly along the branches above the pond.

He heard Brian's voice.

"You're saying... to kill the Earl?"

*Kill the Earl?*

These unexpected words made Nico stop.

"It's only logical that Lydia's fiancé might be a hindrance... but... in any case, he is also the Blue Knight Earl."

After Nico caught a glimpse of the other man's face, he let out a gasp in astonishment.

It was Patrick.

He was a relative on Lydia's mother's side, that is, the fairy doctor of the McKeel family. This man had previously appeared in London, stating that he wanted Lydia to return as the Prophet's fiancée, and now he was having a private discussion with Brian.

They knew each other? Carefully thinking about it, it wasn't surprising. Brian was a fairy that had blood connections to the McKeel clan, and since it was the same clan, Patrick was the fairy doctor. It also made sense to get in contact with clansmen staying in the fairy realm for certain matters.

Patrick went on to say:

"It's possible that the Earl Ashenbert has connections with the Prince."

.....*What?*

"The Prince you're speaking of, is the Prince of Calamity who is an enemy of the Prophet?"

"That's right, the Earl used unseelie magic to kill the Trow. He was suddenly able to manipulate magic, the only possibility I can think of is that the Prince granted some kind of magic to him."

At this moment, Nico's foot slipped.

Without enough time to shout out, he fell into the bushes below. Brian turned around after hearing this.

"Who is it? What are you doing here?"

Raven was hidden behind the trees, but Brian was heading straight towards the bushes that Nico had fallen in.

*This is bad.....!*

Nico stiffened, his entire body breaking out in a cold sweat.

Compared to killing the Earl, the substance of the conversation was shocking.

The Prince's name confused Nico even more.

*The Prince and the Earl were in correspondence?*

*No, they must have made a mistake, they completely misunderstood the relations between Edgar and the Prince.*

As Nico thought this, his heart was restless, as he had always been unable to comprehend why Edgar could kill the Trow.

Regardless, according to the present situation, they won't let Nico, who was eavesdropping, get away. Things would definitely end badly if he was caught. Anxiously, Nico looked all around.

Just as Brian wanted to peek under the bushes, Patrick suddenly yelled out. "Watch out! Brian!"

A huge shadow from the bushes jumped out.

It was a demon dog, covered in fur and baring its teeth.

Brian had been knocked down by the demon dog, both of them falling together. Patrick held a knife and ran, planning to help Brian.

But there were more demon dogs, and they sprang out in all directions from the bushes to attack the two men.

One demon dog that was pushed away by Brian fell towards the pile of bushes where Nico was staying.

Its glowing red eyes ferociously glared at Nico. The hair on Nico's back raised, and ran out from the bushes, flustered.

But once he left the bushes, numerous demon dogs burst into the area where they were fighting with Brian, and sharp claws suddenly flashed before Nico's eyes.

It's too late! Just as Nico closed his eyes, his body was suddenly raised.

"Raven..."

Raven had jumped into the pack of demon dogs and grabbed Nico.

Although Raven had taken a defensive stance against the demon dogs, they abruptly stopped barking and completely fell silent.

Just as he thought that, they slowly backed away, and after retreating some distance, they bent down on the ground.

Bewildered, Brian and Patrick stood motionless. Then, a huge demon dog slowly walked out from between the trees.

Nico saw the figure; it was a black demon dog under Ulysses' control — Jimmy.

Then he looked at Raven and said:

(Mr. Raven, did you know? These two have been talking about killing your master. If you wish, we can get rid of them for you.)

“....I have no authority to decide.”

Raven said only these words, turning his back to the demon dogs while holding Nico, and then left the scene.

Despite the sudden start of an uproar behind him, Raven left the woods at a rapid pace, as if everything had nothing to do with him.

Nico, whose mind was racing, suddenly recovered at that moment.

“Hey... put me down.”

Raven stopped and put Nico down on the ground in accordance to his wishes. He stood properly on his two hind feet, hastily tidying his disheveled fur and necktie, then raised his head to look at Raven.

“What on earth is going on? Ulysses’ demon dog didn’t attack you, and it also said that it was going to get rid of those two for the Earl.”

Raven was silent.

“You and the Earl are hiding something from us, right?! The Earl cooperating with the Prince’s organization, isn’t that so? Brian and Patrick were saying that.”

“That is not the case.”

“Then what is it? Explain!”

“Forgive me, right now I am unable to explain to you.”

Nico impatiently messed up his fur once more, which then quickly and properly groomed by Raven.

“Lydia really trusts the Earl, and said that she was going to get married, what am I going to do?”

Nico walked alone to leave Raven.

“Mr. Nico.....”

“Don’t come here! I... don’t want to see Lydia get hurt.”

Raven stood still, seeming to have given up.

“I want to be alone for a while. Tell Lydia that I’m going home.”

\*

During the carriage ride to the Barrett family’s banquet, Lydia had been restlessly looking out the window.

Nico wasn’t here anymore. She heard Raven say that Nico was going home, but

she didn't understand the reason at all.

*By going home, did he mean returning to Mother's homeland on the island?*

Lydia previously thought that Nico had perhaps intended to live in this small town, but she hadn't expected him to want to go to such a distant place.

She wasn't sure if Nico would come back. Thinking about it, Nico had lived for a very long time before meeting her mother. Despite Lydia not knowing since when he had been staying in the Hebride islands, for Nico, it wasn't strange that the place that he should be returning to is that island, and not this small town where her mother was resting.

“Cheer up, Lydia, Nico will return.”

Edgar, who was sitting by her side had tried countless times to console Lydia, who was brooding since morning.

“Did he really just disappear like that on his own? There's also a possibility that even if he wants to come back, but he can't or something.”

The person who said this was Brian, who sat opposite to Edgar. He was wearing Father's old suit and easily looked exactly like a member of the Carlton family. Edgar and Brian were acting more sour towards each other compared to yesterday.

“Since humans are beings who lie.”

“I see. You have human blood too, thus you can also lie.”

From the start of the morning, as long as the two were near each other, they would assume an attitude of testing each other.

“How should I say it, after all, he's a valet brimming with elusiveness, emitting a very strange aura. For example, perhaps Nico had discovered valet-kun's secret? In what way? Imagination is also a privilege of humans, correct?”

“Raven and Nico are friends, don't be ridiculous.”

Then, Edgar looked towards Father, who was sitting across from Lydia.

“Oh that's right, Professor, do we really need to bring him along to the banquet?”

“He said he wanted to go.”

“It'll be okay Father, because I will properly behave courteously like a human.”

Father sighed quietly and appeared to have already given up.

“Brian... onii-sama, I will introduce you as my cousin at the banquet, so don't say anything unnecessary.”

“Alright.”

Although Brian’s attitude was quite playful, he would occasionally glance at Edgar and find him exuding a tense atmosphere.

Soon after, the carriage arrived at the Barrett house.

Escorted by Edgar, Lydia entered the residence.

This was the town’s largest house. When Lydia was a child, it had looked like a castle through her eyes. Although this place was too imposing, making it difficult to approach, she didn’t have this feeling as she was together with Edgar.

Even if it was the first time visiting this place, he was able to assume a dignified manner without any awareness of it.

He greeted Mr. Barrett perfectly, and the host smiled widely, who immediately became fascinated by Edgar.

“My my, nevertheless, Mr. Carlton, your daughter agreeing to marry such an amazing partner like the Earl, you laboriously raising a child alone as a man wasn’t in vain.”

“You are very kind, but I haven’t done anything.”

Lydia’s father had been quite laissez-faire regarding her education, so he scratched his head awkwardly.

“Moreover Miss Carlton, it has been so long, I didn’t recognize you. You’re resembling your mother more and more.”

“Oh, is that so?”

This was the first time anyone had said that to her, so Lydia was startled. Perhaps it was because she just happened to wear her mother’s evening dress today.

As she didn’t have a dress suitable for the banquet, she decided to wear her mother’s clothing.

The salmon pink satin texture really suited her mother’s transparent white skin and pale blonde hair, but Lydia lacked both of these qualities.

She initially felt that the outfit didn’t suit her and planned to rent a dress to wear, but under Edgar’s heavy persuasion, she decided to wear this dress.

Even though it was an old dress, the latest trends for formal clothes in the rural area were still very peculiar. In midst of having a seamstress make alterations, Edgar proposed many suggestions to the dress. This was presumably because

the dress would only match with ribbons and flowers, creating a fresh and pure atmosphere that would match Lydia's style.

"Even if a family lacks a son, a capable daughter will be able to return the favor."

Sensing the subtle courtesy in his words, Lydia's father smiled wryly.

Lydia recalled that because the Carlton family was without an heir, her father was always advised that he should remarry. Father, who was obstinate in refusing to remarry, was a stubborn eccentric in this small town.

"Ah, you wouldn't want to let your nephew inherit the family property, right?"

"Uh, no, that....."

"That's right, in order to become a scholar like Uncle, I plan to study hard in the future."

Brian got carried away and began to speak, making Father flustered.

Edgar, as if wanting to leave this conversation circle, pulled Lydia's hand.

After entering the hall, the people among the masses gathered and simultaneously looked towards them.

"It'll be alright. Tonight, you are the most beautiful in the world."

Although Edgar praised Lydia in this way, the one who was attracting all the attention was surely him.

Even amongst London's glamorous society, he was very conspicuous. In this countryside's banquet, it was as if a swan had already mistakenly flown into a flock of geese.

Lydia wasn't even a goose, but rather a lost black thrush that was wandering aimlessly in a human village.

Many people had already gathered in the hall, and when they had the first dance in the middle of the crowd, voices could be heard from everywhere. Things like "it's that eccentric..." and "is she really the fiancée?" were said. "...Hey, surely you're feeling disillusioned? You're considered as someone who's engaged to a strange woman."

"What? What are you saying? Everyone is captivated by you, aren't they?"

"You don't need to say that kind of lie that can easily be seen through."

"You really are too slow."

He gave her a look of surprise and then burst out laughing.

"Well, it doesn't matter. Since you didn't notice, I will overlook the men who

had passionately glanced your way."

The prelude to the music began, and the sound of dancing echoed throughout the hall.

While dancing, Lydia hadn't realized when she was getting better at it.

In Lydia's heart, she always saw herself as an inconspicuous country girl. Even so, as long as she remembered that Edgar liked her, she somehow no longer cared about the staring and the malicious gossiping by others around her.

This was why she was able to keep calm when Edgar was asked to dance by daughters of the wealthy families, one after another.

After leaving the hall, Lydia went to a small room for drinks. Despite that some people who were acquainted with her, they had only asked about Edgar and what 'magic' she had used to capture him. She was fed up by how she was still viewed as a witch like in the past.

The reason Edgar praised Lydia was really because of his own preferences.

"You're really good at dancing, Lydia."

Brian was sitting on chair by the corner and picked up a glass of Scotch.

"Brian... onii-san, will you not dance?"

"I find human dancing with restricted movements weird. Aurora fairies prefer dancing freely."

Speaking of that....Lydia thought as she walked over to him.

"If you did fairy dancing, you would surely dance better, because you're my sister."

Lydia shrugged.

"Initially I wasn't really able to dance.....I was much like Father."

Not knowing whether or not Brian noticed Lydia's intention to deny that she was a changeling, he changed the subject.

"Did you only dance with Edgar? Just then, the gentleman was trying to request for one and yet you left as if you were running away."

"What! Nobody would ever ask me to dance. They merely spoke a little but they would suddenly pause within conversation and it made me feel awkward... They shouldn't force themselves to talk to me. If they wanted to get acquainted with Edgar, it would be better to introduce themselves personally to him."

"I see, now I seem to understand why your fiancé is a shady philander."

He said, laughing.

Lydia didn't know why she was being laughed at, she merely believed that it would be great if Brian was able to enjoy life in the human world.

"Hey, do you want to dance with me? If it's me, I wouldn't be surprised by you dancing freely with the Aurora fairy dance."

"Oh, that's a good idea."

He stood up and took the initiative to lead the way to the hall. It was surely because he was itching to dance.

"Lydia, the humans in this small town don't really believe in fairies."

As they held hands and gently danced, Brian spoke. Was it because he casually brought up the topic of fairies just a moment ago, that he was laughed at?

"Yes, now that I can still sense the people with fairies beside them, it truly is very little. In the Highlands it might be different, but in this small town and London, people gradually considered things that were invisible to the eye as non-existent."

Brian led Lydia, gently twirling in this hall that was so crowded with people that they would nearly bump into each other.

"Hey, you possess human blood, so when you were staying in the fairy realm, didn't you feel out of place?"

"When in the fairy realm, people like us will be raised in the fairy way; when in the human world, they will be raised in a human way, so I never felt that I was out of place."

"But you wanted to get to know the human world, right?"

"I wanted to see my little sister."

"That kind of feeling is what humans possess."

".....Oh, that is true. For companions who also possessed human blood, I'm probably a little different. No matter where I went, I always took my little sister for a walk. She was very dependant on me, and would cry if I wasn't there. It was cute."

He looked into the distance, as he reminisced.

"So, although my sister was already gone, I was always worried about her and obstinately kept asking my parents and adults around me."

Lydia hoped that she wasn't a changeling. But she thought that if she really wasn't Brian's sister and only felt like his real sister a little, she would feel lonely.

Brian's steps was that of an Aurora fairy dance, Lydia began to feel immersed in the liberating feeling.

His long hair was emitting a soft light and trailed along the path they had danced, but surely Lydia was the only one who could see it.

"How does it feel to see your sister again?"

Perhaps because she had taken the initiative to call herself his sister, Brian unexpectedly looked at her wide-eyed, and then smiled softly.

"Being able to come here is truly great. You seem quite happy, as if you like the human world."

"Yes, thanks to Father and Mother... and Edgar."

The dance came to an end. Brian, who stood there, looked at Lydia as if he were thinking about something.

Just when he was about to say something, there was the sound of an "um..." interrupting.

"Congratulations on your engagement."

It was the pastor's son, Andy. For Lydia, he was merely a neighbor who pulled pranks on her in her memories.

It was unknown whether Brian assumed a brotherly attitude as he casually left. And so, Lydia was forced to face Andy.

He appeared to be a boy with a bored looking face, and so he still hadn't changed even if they haven't seen each other for a long time.

"Apparently the matter of having a fiancé isn't one of your delusions."

From the beginning, Andy felt that Lydia was insane and kept his distance from her, and yet in order to say some sarcastic remarks, he deliberately approached her. This too was the same as in the past.

"Yes, thank you for your blessing."

"It doesn't look like you are very compatible with him, you're not deceiving him, are you?"

"It is none of your business."

Seeing Lydia sharply turning around, offended, he had a strange expression as if he felt that her getting angry was almost unthinkable.

Then he fell silent.

Nevertheless, he did not leave, thus Lydia felt quite uncomfortable. How many times has this situation happened today? Why does everyone who clearly have

nothing to say, try to find me and talk to me?

“Um, well then, I’m going...”

Lydia tried to leave, but Andy, as if he made up his mind, called out to her.

“Will you dance with me!”

“What!”

A male who finally dared to ask Lydia to dance with him, was reportedly the son of Professor Carlton’s friend.

When Edgar had heard this, he sensed that in Lydia’s eyes, Andy just ought to be a malicious childhood friend.

Edgar had always known from the start that he was wandering around Lydia, as when other men were talking to her he looked nervous and anxious.

It wasn’t only Andy, but the youth who wanted to ask Lydia to dance and strike a conversation were probably the kind of guys that heckled Lydia in childhood or ignored her existence. Since Lydia had assumed a guarded manner, they could not directly ask: “please dance with me.”

While Edgar watched from the sidelines, he secretly smiled and believed that it was alright, but that man had unexpectedly asked her to dance with him.

“Having said that, the men in this town are really shy.”

Edgar stood in front of the wide open door of the balcony, muttering to himself.

“It seems like men like you are considered unusual.”

Brian replied, suddenly standing next to him.

“Were you satisfied, being able to dance with your sister?”

“Yeah..... she’s a good girl, really worthy of being called my sister. Thinking about it again, I feel that it’s such a pity that she’s with you.”

Edgar and Brian exchanged a smile.

“So, when are you going to kill me?”

“What are you talking about?”

“Didn’t you discuss with Patrick about killing me?”

Patrick appeared, wanting to make Lydia the Prophet’s fiancée, furthermore, he also met with Brian. It was only logical that Raven informed him of this matter.

They already knew that Raven was at the site of the private discussion, so they of course understood that their intentions had been exposed.

“I didn’t expect Patrick to go as far as to come to this small town, with that said, you are also a member of the McKeel clan, so it’s no wonder that you would be

involved with him."

Brian suddenly had a solemn expression.

"Edgar, are those black demon dogs your subordinates? A descendant of the Blue Knight Earl controlling the unseelie court really is unfathomable."

"Brian, you don't want to play house at all with your little sister. In order to awaken the Prophet, who will reportedly save the McKeel clan, you came to take Lydia away, correct?"

"Who are you? Are you a person who, by chance obtained the name of the Blue Knight Earl? If so, why were you able to kill the Trow? Do you intend to let the unseelie court work for you?"

"I could ask the same thing on who you are. If you are Lydia's real brother, why would you want to ruin her happiness?"

".....I don't think she would obtain happiness marrying a man who deals with the unseelie."

Edgar wasn't sure as to what will happen.

Would he cause Lydia to suffer in future?

His eyes searched for Lydia, who was awkwardly dancing with the pastor's son.

Ah, it's as if they are incompatible with each other.

He was the only one suitable for Lydia, and he loved her more than anyone else.

*How could I abandon Lydia?*

As long as fate wouldn't convict Edgar, Lydia would belong to him.

Edgar slowly returned his gaze to Brian and smiled at him.

"I will compete with you. You guys have been waiting for the opportunity to attack me all along, and it's quite troublesome, correct? Moreover, the time left until the day of the full moon is limited."

As the song ended, the people in the hall stopped moving.

"Well, I must pull that clumsy gentleman out of his wonderful dream."

Edgar muttered as he walked towards Lydia's direction.

\*\*\*

**[1]** Haggis is a traditional Scottish cuisine made with chopped sheep organs, onions, oats and seasoning that is then boiled in a bag made from the sheep's stomach.

**[2]** A bloodstone is a dark green translucent mineral (a variety of jasper) with

red spots.

# Chapter 3: The guided trap

“Even if it’s a little bit, I want to know who you were before I met you. The scenery you saw, the people you’ve corresponded with, the memories between you and your mother, it’s as if these will be precious to me.”

Whenever he was too gentle, Lydia was a little afraid.

Could she believe that such a warm moment would last forever?

“Hey, Edgar, shouldn’t we inform your parents of the engagement?”

Although she was always concerned about it, Lydia wasn’t able to ask before. Edgar’s parents were killed, and he too was already considered dead. The land where he was born and raised in, he no longer has a relationship or connection with it.

Although his parents’ tomb surely exist, Edgar’s name and his past had been buried. The bones of an unknown child were also buried together.

Was it because he still not able to sort out his feelings, that he wasn’t ready to visit their grave?

This was why Lydia had always been unable to ask such a question. However, since he was thinking fondly of Lydia’s hometown, it would be impossible to not be reminded of his own.

“Right now... I cannot go.”

Although he answered very decisively, he sounded like he was in pain. Lydia felt pain in her chest too.

“But there will inevitably be a day where I’ll let you see. I want to walk together with you in Sylvainford’s beautiful forest.”

Lydia moved her neck slightly and saw sad but strong eyes full of determination looking back at her.

\*

At dawn, Edgar took advantage of the time when the morning mist was still drifting about and left the Carlton house, heading towards the outskirts of the town.

The only person he took with him was Raven.

They weaved their way through the fields of wheat, the goal being the menhir

that towered over the overgrown wheat field.

They almost reached a distance where even if Brian and Patrick were waiting for someone to attack, it wouldn't be unusual.

Today, there was going to be a duel within the visible range of those menhir. It was unknown whether they intended to kill Edgar or capture him to get information about Prince. But if Edgar were to win, he would surely be able to know many things relating to the Prophet.

There was certainly a chance at succeeding. Brian and Patrick don't know of Raven's fighting capability. Unless they were aimed at by a rifle from far away, a surprise attack was unlikely.

However, whether it would be against the half-fairy Brian, or Patrick the fairy doctor, they probably wouldn't use guns. Rather, it was best to be cautious of magic.

“Lord Edgar, something is coming.”

There were unknown, moaning-like sounds were heard. What seemed like black clouds had appeared and were creeping towards them in the air.

*A swarm of insects?*

In the instant he thought that, Edgar could no longer see anything.

Raven acted quickly.

As soon as he plunged into the overgrown area of wheat, indistinct screams were immediately heard.

As Raven sat on top of the person who collapsed onto the ground with a thud, long orange hair could be fleetingly seen. The reason why the bugs suddenly scattered in all directions, like a mist dispersing, was probably because Brian had lost consciousness.

Just as he breathed a sigh of relief, Edgar sensed the presence of someone behind him.

He avoided the sudden thrust of a saber. Patrick distanced himself from Edgar, who turned around, but Edgar already had a pistol gripped in his hand and assumed a defensive position, ready to attack.

However, he wasn't able to aim at his target. Patrick's figure went blurry, then it began to shake into two figures, three and then they overlapped.

“Is it a fake?”

“Lord Edgar, please be careful!”

Hearing Raven's voice, Edgar looked back to see several Brians surrounding him. Raven was already battling with them.

Then, Edgar opened fire. Brian and Patrick's divided figures emitted lights before disappearing after being hit by bullets one after another. But the number of them hadn't lessened. They advanced slowly, narrowing the circle. "Arrow, the sword!"

In the moment Edgar summoned at the sword, it materialized before him. He took hold of the sword.

This was a sword that could kill fairies. Considering the fact that those divided bodies were possibly fairies, the sword could certainly become an effective weapon.

But Edgar was hesitant to use it. Using the sword meant drawing out the evil magic that the sword possessed. Could this power be used so easily?

If it was possible, the seelie should not be killed. This idea was also in mind. Just as he was caught up in his worries, the doppelgangers before him dispersed all at once, the shining small goblins ran in all directions, and the black demon dogs burst in, chasing after them.

Accepting help from Ulysses' subordinates wasn't his original intention, but right now, he had no time to pay attention to them.

*Where was the real Patrick? And Brian?*

Edgar quickly glanced around and spotting Brian next to the menhir, he ran after him.

The moment he tried grabbing onto Brian, the ground under his feet collapsed. A cave appeared, intending to swallow Edgar. While he was falling, he grabbed Brian's arm.

He pulled Brian down with him.

"Let go.... whoa!"

Hearing Brian's screams, Edgar felt as if he was falling for a long time.

After coming to his senses, he discovered he was lying in a cavern-like place. Although he had fallen, he did not seem injured, nor was there pain anywhere. His hands touched the ground, feeling what seemed to be moist soil. Surrounded by darkness, Edgar guessed that he ought to be in a cave, but in reality, he wasn't too sure.

This place probably wasn't in the human world.

“H-help me.....”

A voice was coming from somewhere. Just as he thought this, the voice overlapped with the sound of growling dogs. Even the demon dogs fell down too?

“Edgar, you’re here, right? Ahh, damn!”

“Brian, where are you?”

“Over here!”

“I can’t see anything.”

He heard the other click his tongue, followed by the lighting up of the surroundings.

Brian’s long hair emitted a faint glow. He had fallen to the ground, and was desperately pushing demon dogs away in order for his throat to not be pierced by their fangs.

“D-didn’t I ask you to hurry up and save me!”

“Do I have an obligation to save you?”

“...You want to know about the Prophet, right?”

“Is that information of equal value to your life?”

“You.... don’t you want to know Lydia’s... the Prophet’s fiancée’s true role?”

*True role?*

Edgar held the sword firmly.

“Ohh please be sure to let me know.”

“Hurry up...!”

Brian shouted anxiously. Holding the sword, Edgar approached the demon dogs.

“Hey, release him!”

The ears of the demon dogs twitched slightly, but they did not obey Edgar’s words. Although they did not attack Edgar, it was very possible that they were only willing to obey Ulysses or the black demon dog who had the position of leader.

Brian had been bitten everywhere and it seemed that he no longer had the strength.

It can’t be helped. Edgar grasped the sword once more.

The blue star sapphire became a scarlet red ruby. The sword, whose seal was already undone, would completely obey Edgar’s will.

Like this, he waved the sword.

The heads of demon dogs were cut off, filling the surroundings with the rancid stench of their black blood.

With great effort, Brian crawled out from underneath the enormous hairy bodies, which were void of life.

“Lord Edgar, where are you?”

It was Raven’s voice.

Raven appeared from deep within the cave. He glanced at Brian, who was covered in wounds and sitting on the floor. He looked towards Edgar, probably having determined that it was unnecessary to be on guard against him.

“Raven, you fell down as well?”

“Yes, because I was in a hurry to catch up with you.”

“What about Patrick?”

“If he was not devoured by the demon dogs, then he should be fine.”

Edgar thought of another thing, and looked down at Brian.

“Was this cave your doing? Was it a trap to catch me?”

“....Yes.”

“Then that is just great, we can simply leave with you, right?”

“W–well..... there’s no way out from the inside, if Patrick isn’t here to save us...”

Edgar took a look at Brian’s expression and snorted derisively.

“Don’t spout out such terrible lies.”

“I–it’s true!”

“You’ll regret making me angry.”

Edgar thrust the sword in front of Brian, and he immediately turned pale with fright.

“I know!.... I know how to get out, put that away.”

Raven took ahold of Brian, leaving him no choice but to stand up reluctantly.

“Let me just say, it’s going to take a while to get out of here.”

“Then walk as you talk. What do you and Patrick plan to have Lydia do?”

“....You really are like a wolf in sheep’s clothing in front of Lydia.”

Brian murmured, grimacing.

“Actually, it’s the opposite. I can only maintain my true self in front of Lydia. To be honest, being like this right now really isn’t what I wanted.”

Edgar showed off his sword while smiling. Brian seemed unconvinced, but

perhaps he had given up pondering over difficult matters, so he began to answer Edgar's question.

"We originally planned to wait until you were trapped here, then go and tell Lydia that you were kidnapped by the Prophet's enemies. We wanted to convince her that if she wanted to save you, she only had to awaken the Prophet, and then bring her to the Hebrides."

If that was the case, even if Patrick was alone, he would still be able to carry out the plan.

"So, what is the true role of the Prophet's fiancée?"

"Actually, his fiancée is not selected in order to marry the Prophet. Rather the purpose is to give life to the Prophet's necessary existence. The Prophet can be said to be deceased, and that he needs to be resurrected in order to take action in the human world."

Astounded, Edgar continued to calmly listen. He was thinking that if Lydia had completed her role in that kind of ceremony, she would also face danger.

"That practically sounds like a sacrifice."

"So it seems..... but the fiancée will not necessarily die as a result. The women who were chosen all possessed great vitality."

"In that case, why are those women referred to as 'fiancées'?"

"I think it's probably because the selected girl must always stay by the Prophet's side whenever he is awake. She must always stay by the Prophet's side in order to supplement his abilities, up until he completes the mission before entering into a deep sleep again, or until that girl's life comes to an end."

Surprisingly, Brian was honestly telling them the truth, as he probably did not worship the Prophet.

It was said that the Prophet would save the McKeel clan from a crisis. But rather than saying that Brian was a relative of the clan, it would be better to say that under the plan for the Prophet's existence, he was also a victim.

Although Brian possessed human blood, he was also a member of the fairy clan. In order to not let the lineage of Prophet's fiancées diminish, how many others were born like him in the end, an existence neither fully human nor fairy?

Thinking about this, it wasn't surprising to question it.

"Even if the 'fiancée' is a healthy woman, her remaining lifespan will be shortened. Because of this, there will be a second fiancé to reciprocate her

sacrifice, so she can spend the rest of her life without difficulty, as compensation for her family.”

Therefore Lydia also has a second fiancée? So it’s the clan head’s son, the one named Fergus McKeel.

They once said, that man will take Lydia as his wife after she completes her mission, so there was no need to worry. So that’s the real meaning. The more Edgar understood, the more he felt angry.

Their purpose of coming to take Lydia was actually wanting her to hand her life over. To go as far as to hide such important inside information.

“But, if that’s the case, then the ‘fiancée’ doesn’t necessarily have to be a woman?”

“I think it’s because the vitality of women is stronger than that of men. Moreover, his fiancée must also be a human proficient with fairy magic. In order to not let our mixed human and fairy blood be severed off, the clansmen were forced to repeatedly conduct children exchanges.”

Lydia’s mother was a changeling as well as the Prophet’s fiancée. The reason why she left the island, was apparently because she wanted to raise an objection to this custom.

Professor Carlton had said that this was the reason that Lydia’s mother did not allow her daughter to suffer the exchange.

Brian was distressed because his younger sister was considered a changeling and brought to the human world, thus he was among those who were hurt due to the changeling traditions. However, he planned to conspire with Patrick and make Lydia, who he called his younger sister, become the clan’s tool.

Edgar could not help but feel baffled.

“You thought that Lydia was your younger sister, therefore you came to see her, and yet you planned to offer her to the Prophet? You say she is your sister, but this is a lie, right?”

Brian instantly grimaced but said indifferently:

“This is all for the McKeel clan.”

Edgar really didn’t think he said this honestly, but Brian did not continue speaking.

A pale blue light could finally be seen ahead, it seemed that the exit was approaching.

After quickly passing through what looked like a very long cavern, a lake appeared before them.

The moon, which lacked a half, floated in the air; this was the lake at night. Even looking back, they didn't see any features of the cave that they just came through, rather a forest obscured their sight.

"It took up so much time, didn't it?"

"From now on, we have to start walking. This is also the fairy realm, and we seem to have come to a very distant place."

Brian pointed to the shadow like peaks on the other side of the lake.

"This place is already in the Highlands. To return to Lydia's small town, you must first find the shortcut to return to the human world, but going to the shortcut from here should take some more time."

"The Highlands? Saying it as such, the Hebrides islands is very close to here?"

"It would seem so, if you want to go into the Hebrides, there's a shortcut."

"Then we're changing the destination to the Hebrides."

Brian was surprised at first, yet appeared unwilling soon after. Edgar stared at him threateningly.

"Only one thing is certain, as long as the Prophet disappears, you guys will abandon Lydia."

Edgar was thinking. If Patrick was safe, then while they were passing through the fairy realm, he was definitely finding ways to bring Lydia to the island.

He should be in a hurry to achieve the plan before the full moon.

For Edgar, the opportunity to bury the Prophet was only during the full moon.

Even if he rushed back to the small town, he was afraid it would be too late.

They had to first make a detour to the sacred land.

\*

When Lydia got up in the morning, Edgar was gone, and Raven had also disappeared. Although her father had said they may have gone for a walk, would someone go for a several hour walk without having breakfast? Also, Brian was missing.

Not knowing what the situation was at all, Lydia felt anxious and left the house to search for Edgar.

Thinking back now, last night Edgar seemed to have come to some decision. Lydia felt that he was unusually gentle at the time, and wanted to quietly spend

time together.

Was it because Edgar anticipated that he would disappear before her?

Lydia went to various places, feeling extremely restless.

There was no sign of Edgar at the town centre or by her mother's grave. She headed towards the outskirts, and as soon as she saw the menhir half-covered in the wheat fields, she subconsciously advanced towards there.

After she approached the menhir, she heard a sharp voice coming from the roots of the lush wheat.

(This is mine!)

(No, I found it!)

It seemed that the small goblins were fighting.

(Hand it over!)

(No!)

Lydia looked over there, wanting to ask them whether or not they saw a human.....

“Hey, can I ask you guys...”

She fell speechless instantly, because she saw the silver button that the small goblins were fighting over.

*Wasn't that Edgar's button?*

“Let me see that!”

After she snatched the button from the fairy's hand to confirm, she found the Earl family's insignia. This was definitely Edgar's.

(Lydia, what are you doing!)

(That's mine!)

The two fairies angrily pulled and twisted Lydia's hair.

“I know, I will return it to you guys, but I have something to ask. Was this found here? Did you guys see the person who dropped it?”

(It was dropped here.)

(We didn't see anyone.)

“Then what did you guys see?”

(Black demon dogs fighting an Aurora fairy.)

Black demon dogs? Ulysses often controlled black demon dogs, and was the Aurora fairy referring to Brian?

Was Edgar being attacked by the black demon dogs and then Brian was dragged

into it?

(It's very rare to see Aurora fairies nearby.)

(It would be nice if they came a little closer, then we could've seen the dance of the Northern Lights.)

(It would be nice if black demon dogs did not appear.)

“So what happened after they fought?”

(They disappeared shortly after.)

Lydia got up and walked around the menhir. This place was a connection between the human world and the fairy realm. Given that the fairies disappeared, perhaps they had scattered and escaped into the fairy realm. Was this also the case for Edgar and Brian?

Their relationship didn't seem too good. The thought was really worrying.

(Hey, give that back to us.)

(You've already looked at it enough, right?)

Lydia who was urged by the smallgoblins, gently put the button down in front of them.

“Listen, don't quarrel anymore.”

After the two fairies nodded, they each grabbed both ends of the button and disappeared on good terms.

Left alone, Lydia suddenly trembled and held onto her arms.

Ulysses' subordinates had appeared; was Edgar safe?

The Prince was clearly already dead, why did they still want to bother Edgar? Could it be that he can't obtain happiness?

Holding back the urge to cry, Lydia hurried her way back home.

*I have to do something, I must save Edgar.*

But Nico was not here. Although Lydia was a fairy doctor, she had always relied on Nico in the past to lead the way in the fairy realm. If she went on her own to find Edgar, she might get lost and won't be able to return.

*Mother, what should I do?*

She clearly knew that her mother hadn't been home for a long time, yet Lydia ran all the way home like a child who came across a dreadful fairy.

“Father!”

As she ran to the door, she noticed her father coming out and rushed over, as if she wanted to hug him.

“What happened? Lydia, you hadn’t returned after a long time, I was planning to see what had happened to you.”

“Edgar is gone! Raven and Brian too! What should I do... they might have lost their way into the fairy realm!”

“Calm down, at any rate, come in first.”

“Apparently they were attacked by black demon dogs so I must go to the fairy realm and find them. But I don’t have the means to go very far myself, I’ll soon get lost... ahh but I have to go...”

“Please allow me to help you.”

At this time, the wooden door that had been shut was pushed open, and a black-haired man appeared.

Both Lydia and her father recognized him.

It was Patrick, the fairy doctor of the McKeel clan.

She and Patrick had met in London not long ago. He made a request at that time, wanting Lydia to save the McKeel clan, but Edgar had driven him away. This time, it appears that he was going to have Lydia properly listen to what he had to say, and so he paid a visit in Scotland in particular.

He pretended to be a student of Professor Carlton’s at the University of London, asked for the professor’s home address, and then arrived in town yesterday.

“But, I saw Earl Ashenbert and Brian.”

Lydia, who was still not calm, restlessly listened to Patrick’s explanation.

Although her father awkwardly stayed in the Carlton’s reception room, but after all, Patrick had seen what happened to Edgar and the others, so he was unable to ask him to leave immediately like before.

“Mr. Patrick, you know Brian?”

“Yes, because he is a clan member. I was quite surprised that Brian had appeared in this town... putting that aside, when I saw a group of black demon dogs surrounding the menhir, I really was scared half to death.”

Next, Patrick said that he witnessed Edgar and Brian being attacked by black demon dogs and then disappearing without a trace.

It appeared that he originally tried to go and help, as he himself had several bites inflicted on his body from them.

Luckily, the demon dogs’ magic will become weakened in the human world, and the poison of the wound will be eliminated by sunlight, so they would probably

heal very quickly. Patrick, of course knew this, so he didn't seem too worried.

"Um, was there someone at the scene controlling the demon dogs?"

As the Prince's matters shouldn't be told to people who are unrelated, asking this question seemed unusual. Although Lydia knew this, she couldn't help but ask.

Patrick's response was unexpected.

"It seems like they weren't in the area, but it ought to be the act of the Prophet's enemies."

He replied, knowing very well who was controlling the demon dogs.

"The Prophet's.... enemies?"

"That is right, Miss Lydia. The bottom line is that it is the ones who brought disaster upon our island."

Could it be that those weren't Ulysses' demon dogs?

On the land where the McKeel clan lived, the number of unseelie court had progressively increased, thus the land's vitality became weak. Not only was there poor harvest over many years, but livestock and humans were also infected with diseases.

In order to remedy the situation, they planned to rely on the Prophet of the legends, but the reason why crisis hit the island was apparently because the Prophet had enemies.

The Prophet preserved his strength, not because he could predict that a crisis would happen to the clan in the future, but because he knew his 'enemies' would appear at some point.

"Brian is the last of the Philis Chyris\* to be descended from the McKeel. He knows the location of the sacred land where the Prophet lies dormant, and can enter that land. Perhaps he was kidnapped as a result."

Lydia interrupted his thoughts, looking up to ask a question.

"Um, is he the only one? Isn't there also his family and other descendants of changelings?"

"They were hunted by the Sluaghs.\* The only survivors were him and the elder, but that elder died soon after. The elder might have persuaded him to live with the Aurora fairies in the sky."

Sluaghs. If Aurora fairies were light spirits who dwelled in the night sky, then the Sluaghs were pure dark souls. Both sides were fairy clans who always had a

hostile relationship. The Sluaghs feared light; although Brian's family wasn't pure fairy, it was hard to believe that the Aurora fairies were actually attacked. "The Sluaghs were originally the kind of unseelie that were abundant on the island, but they have been more active recently and are increasing in number, leaving the island twice as desolated. Because humans killed by the Sluaghs will become Sluaghs too, this vicious cycle cannot be stopped."

Whenever Patrick mentioned the Sluaghs, he would frown deeply.

"You mean the evil deeds of the Sluaghs were also done with the Prophet's enemies?"

"That's right, everything was done by the Prince of Calamity. The Prince originally intended for our island to become a lair of evil spirits."

*Prince?*

Hearing that name unexpectedly, Lydia tried to hide her restlessness.

— The Prince of Calamity? This was the same name of the old enemy that killed Edgar's family.

"If you want to confront the Prince of Calamity, you can only draw support from the Prophet's strength. If you want to save the Earl and Brian, there is no alternative way."

If they were both referring to the same 'Prince', then Ulysses' black demon dogs appeared and were watching Edgar and Brian.

"Miss Lydia, please help the McKeel family. If this goes on, the Earl Ashenbert will be taken advantage of, and will become a manipulated person who will murder fairies with the sword. I beg you, this is in order to save the Earl."

Just like Patrick said, if Lydia was able to do anything for Edgar, then this was probably the only thing she could do.

"But..."

But for Lydia, becoming the Prophet's 'fiancée' was really too difficult.

As if he understood what she meant, Patrick nodded.

"...Because this cannot be described in detail to unrelated people, I never explained it, but in fact, waking up the Prophet and marriage, these two things are unrelated. After simply waiting for the prophet to awaken, a woman as the 'fiancée' has to demonstrate the ability to communicate with fairies together with the Prophet, thus bringing about the fiancée's existence. After all, it wouldn't be too likely for a woman with a husband or child to accompany the

Prophet's side all the time. However, Miss Lydia, I understand that I can't help but ask you to accomplish this sort of condition, thus is it possible to ask you to help awaken the Prophet?"

"I really don't need to get married?"

"Wait a minute, Lydia. I apologize, Mr. Patrick, can we really believe what you say? Once on the island, the people there are all from the McKeel family, forcing Lydia to obey you would be very simple, right?"

Father intervened on the topic.

Indeed, if she completely believed in Patrick and went to the island, being forced to marry afterwards would certainly be troublesome.

However, I want to save Edgar.

"Professor Carlton, marriage is a sacred matter. It would be impossible to carry out without Lydia's consent."

"Even so, this is not something that should be hastily decided....."

"There's no time, the next full moon is a one-time opportunity in nineteen years."

There was only one week left. Lydia began to worry.

"...If you miss this opportunity, then you have to wait another nineteen years to be able to approach the Prophet?"

"There is no mistake. On the night the moon sinks farthest to the south, the road leading to the sacred land will open. I ask that you enter the passage to the sacred land and open the coffin with the sleeping Prophet, that way the Prophet will awaken."

"I only have to do that, correct?"

"Yes, the only one who is able to open the coffin is a woman of the McKeel clan who inherited the fairy clan's bloodline."

"Lydia, are you willing to do this?"

Father seemed worried by the progression of the conversation.

"Father, they are Mother's relatives after all, I don't think they will harm us."

"Will the Prophet really wake up if the coffin is opened?"

Father spoke, still sounding as if he did not trust Patrick.

"On that day, the magic will rise to a certain degree, so as long as that power there is absorbed, the Prophet will wake up."

"I've heard that when the McKeel family is faced with a crisis, the Prophet will

awaken out of its own accord."

"That's right. It's just that what should we do, when the Prophet does not wake up through his own power? Perhaps it was predicted beforehand because this would've been conveyed by someone and passed down for generations. This is our one chance in nineteen years. Until now, we also didn't expect having to depend on thinking of a way ourselves..... however, we cannot hesitate any longer on the island's crisis."

Lydia nodded in approval and believed that this was in order to save Edgar. If the Prophet was able to completely bury the Prince's attempts together with his remaining organization, Edgar may truly be freed this time.

"Father, I'm going to the Hebrides."

\*

Edgar and the others advanced along the lakeside.

Although they had been walking for a long time, the night was not yet over.

"How long will it take to get to the human world?"

As Edgar asked Brian, the latter sat down on the spot suddenly, feeling dizzy.

Brian wrinkled his brow painfully, his complexion very pale.

Raven simply pulled Brian, wanting him to stand, but Edgar waved him off.

Edgar crouched in front of Brian, noticing that the blood oozing from his arm had not dried up.

"The bleeding won't stop? Maybe the demon dog's tooth is in your arm."

"Ah... that's probably it."

"It can't be helped, we'll rest here until sunrise."

As long as it was illuminated with sunlight, the demon dog's teeth will disappear and the bleeding will stop. But forcing him to keep walking could result in him losing his life. Edgar spoke as he took this into account.

Probably not expecting Edgar to say that, Brian looked at him in surprise.

"Do you know how long it will be until sunrise?"

Edgar asked.

"I don't know."

"Will you last until then?"

"Depends on my luck."

In order to stop the blood from flowing out of the wound, Edgar wrapped a handkerchief around Brian's arm. But Brian still looked with disgust at Edgar,

who was helping him.

And then they could only wait. Edgar moved slightly away from Brian, sitting down on a rock. Raven stood beside Edgar, seeming to think that it was where he ought to stay, and as if wanting to keep a close watch, he turned towards Brian.

After everyone fell silent, their surroundings were absolutely quiet; there wasn't even the sound of wind, nor the presence of birds or small animals. At first glance, this place was very similar to the human world, but one could feel that fairy realm was full of mystery.

The slight rustle of clothing interrupted the tranquility as Raven took something out of his pocket.

Raven seemed to be concerned as he looked the bright black stone.

“Raven, what is that?”

“I found it in the woods.”

Edgar gazed at the stone that Raven showed him. From its round and polished shape, he recognised it to be a bloodstone.

“Could this be Nico’s bloodstone?”

“Surely enough it is, I noticed that it appeared that Mr. Nico had dropped it, so I picked it up.”

“If you return it to him, he will surely be very happy.”

“Yes.”

He carefully put it into his pocket once more. Raven had the usual blank expression, but if he felt happy because he helped Nico, then compared to before when he cared only about Edgar, he had already grown a lot.

“....Bloodstone?”

Although he looked to be in a lot of pain, Brian still raised his head.

“Hey, is that the real thing? If that’s the case, then please lend it to me. it can replenish an Aurora fairy’s blood as long as it’s held in the hand.”

Raven glanced at Brian, clearly having no intention of taking the object out of his pocket.

“This belongs to Mr. Nico.”

“....I’ll give it back to you, and it won’t go missing.....!”

Brian raised his voice, speaking halfway and exhausting his strength as a result. He pressed against his arm and hung his head.

“Raven, lend it to him.”

Edgar said and Raven finally handed the bloodstone to Brian.

He held the stone firmly and took deep breaths, and subsequently his tightly knit brows relaxed. For him, he had made what appeared to be a narrow escape from death.

Raven still glared at Brian sharply, seemingly keeping a close watch over him, not letting him hide Nico’s bloodstone.

Brian still did not have the energy to notice Raven’s gaze towards him, which was filled with murderous intent.

“Edgar, I didn’t expect you to be so friendly, is it because I might be your brother?”

Despite that, he already appeared to have the strength to speak.

“You’re not Lydia’s brother.”

“Then is it because if I’m not here, you can’t leave the fairy realm? No, even if I wasn’t here, the Prince’s comrades would come and save you. If that’s the case, what are you planning to do with me? By first allowing me to live, do you intend to make me bring you to the sacred land of the Prophet.....? As soon as that matter is over, will you then kill me? Using that terrible sword.”

“It’s because I don’t want to hand Lydia over to the McKeel clan that I’m using you, so if you die now, it would be troublesome. This has nothing to do with the Prince.”

Edgar replied calmly.

He will bury the Prophet for good. He had come to this decision at Lydia’s mother’s grave. From that point on, Edgar was inexplicably calm.

His purpose was decided long ago, and Lydia’s mother was willing to bless him as he was.

Edgar truly felt that way.

Even if Brian thought that Edgar was the Prince’s subordinate, even if doing as such would benefit the Prince’s organization in reality, Edgar’s heart was no longer hesitant.

“You know very well about the demon dogs’ fangs, because you are allies with those guys, right?”

“It’s because I’ve been bitten, a tooth entered my body, and I suffered a lot.”

Brian still looked at him suspiciously.

"I have nearly been killed by the Prince several times. Many of my comrades were also murdered, and only Raven survived."

With his tone of voice sounding too relaxed, Edgar knew that other people who heard this wouldn't believe it.

However, Lydia had sensed Edgar's pain from the beginning and desperately tried to save Edgar who concealed a major lie from her.

"When I was captured by the Prince, it was Lord Edgar who saved me."

Brian briefly turned to Raven as he spoke, finding his eyes staring sharply at Nico's blood stone, and then quickly looked away.

"You mean... you guys are enemies of the Prince? If that's the case then, why did the demon dogs protect you?"

"Who knows? The demon dogs should be under the command of another human. Didn't you see that they weren't listening to my commands at all? How would I know what their master is thinking?"

"....But the sword that killed them is an unseelie sword. I heard Patrick say that you killed a Trow, originally I was doubtful, but it seems to be true. For humans to even be able use the powers of unseelie court...."

Brian began to tremble.

"You were begging me for help at the time. If I didn't have that sword, then you would be bitten to death. And yet, you still take me as a bad guy?"

Brian was taken aback as he looked up, as if he was aware of this fact just now, and so he began to waver.

"....That's.... but, those who are able to directly handle the forces of unseelie are only the Prince of Calamity and the people involved with him."

"Can you be sure of that? The Prince of Calamity was created by someone, if it's something that's able to be passed down between humans, so even if there was another similar human, it wouldn't be strange."

Brian furrowed his brow in thought, as if he was trying to differentiate what represented the absolute evil of Prince to him, and what did not.

"This is impossible, being able to obtain the way of the unseelie magic secrets is an extremely strict method passed down from generation to generation.

Although there are only three families who know the method, with regards to any clan, using that sort of knowledge is taboo, so it's impossible for a human to appear who can manipulate unseelie magic."

“Three families?”

“Since ancient times, they were clans who were closely affiliated with the fairies. One was the Connaught royal family of Ireland\*, this was a clan which had become a myth long ago; then came the Blue Knight Earl of Ibrazel’s family, but they disappeared three hundred years later. ”

The Blue Knight Earl’s family also knew the method of obtaining the secrets of the Unseelie magic? Even if it was like this, it wasn’t surprising, after all, the first Earl had sealed half of the sword’s magic in order to prevent him and his children from using that knowledge.

“Then what about the other family?”

Brian spoke halfway and slowly began unwilling to continue on, but Edgar urged him.

“The last one to remain.... is the McKeel clan of the Highlands.”

“Could it be that the one who created the Prince was.....”

Brian chuckled.

“That guy is the last person who knows the secrets of the unseelie court. Although he was once the McKeel clan’s fairy doctor, he rebelled against the clan and sought refuge with King James. During the war a hundred years ago, I heard that a subset of embittered people from the British army went into hiding and accumulated their knowledge of magic techniques to create the Prince of Calamity, despite losing.”

After the McKeel clan found out about this, they came up with a method dependant on the Prophet, presumably to protect the island from the rebels bringing about disaster.

Brian gave an almost provocative look at Edgar, who was caught up in contemplation.

“Edgar, what method did you use to get the secrets of the unseelie? Apart from you having something to do with the Prince, there isn’t any other possibility, because there are no other people who know how to implement the secret method.”

“....The Blue Knight Earl family originally knew the secret method, isn’t that right? I am the Blue Knight Earl.”

“You’re not a true descendant of the Blue Knight Earl.”

Edgar looked at the Merrow’s sword, which was put aside. As long as no fairies

were killed, the star sapphire sword will bear a gorgeous blue color, and the ruby's scarlet color would be completely concealed.

"But this sword is still an item of the Blue Knight Earl's family, this is a sword which originally possessed that kind of power, so it has nothing to do with the Prince."

Edgar said mumbled, as if saying it for himself to hear.

"If the Prince is your enemy, then you should help us in order to awaken the Prophet."

Edgar took hold of his sword. He held the sword out and stared at Brian, who immediately shrank back in horror.

"I have been fighting the Prince's organization for a long time. Originally, I would blindly curse my fate, but after meeting Lydia, I finally found hope."

Thus, he thought that as long as he could protect Lydia, he was even willing to take up the Prince's memories.

No matter what conspiracies and turbulent karma were behind those memories, Edgar intended to bring the 'Prince' to the grave himself.

"And so I apologize, whether it's the Prince or your Prophet, they are both enemies to me."

The sky which covered the forest slightly began to appear bright.

Dawn was approaching.

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**[1]** Sluaghs are fairies from the Highlands, said to be formed from gathered souls of the deceased.

**[2]** The Connaught royal family of Ireland was one of the five ancient kingdoms.

# Chapter 4: The Island where the prophet sleeps

The Hebrides islands were said to be made up of nearly five hundred large and small islands; with regards to the border, it was very extensive.

Lydia followed after Father and Patrick, spending several days travelling until they finally arrived offshore of some island of the Hebrides. Hearing that the place that her mother lived in was another dozen miles north made Lydia dizzy. Lydia and her father rushed to arrive at the McKeel clan head's mansion just before sunset, where they were taken directly to the guestrooms so that they could rest a little.

It seemed like they would have to wait until dinner to talk to the clan head. Father sat down in a chair, taking his glasses off to wipe them on his cuff while looking over at Lydia.

“Are you tired from the long journey? Take a good rest before dinner.”

Lydia shook her head, as she did not feel tired. Right now, Edgar was definitely caught up in a more difficult situation. Probably because she was always worrying about him, she felt considerably tense.

“Father, I’m sorry you had to accompany me to this place.”

“How could I leave you alone here? The university happens to be on summer break, and besides, going on a journey is not so painful for me.”

As long as it was to gather ore her father would always go, even if there was no decent means of transportation at the destination. Only this time the purpose was not to collect ore, it was an unexpected trip for her father too.

“But you and Mother had eloped, and now you have to meet her relatives because of me.....”

Her father must have felt very awkward.

“This isn’t your fault, this is mine and Aurora’s responsibilities as your parents.”

Father said firmly, smiling comfortingly at Lydia.

“We don’t regret it at all, so you don’t need to worry about troubling the McKeel family.”

Lydia nodded firmly.

She had only been thinking about being able to help Edgar, and rushed here without any further thoughts.

“However, I actually didn’t expect to feel nostalgia. As soon as I recalled that this place was where your mother and I met, perhaps I myself also wanted to come back once more.”

Her father got up and headed towards the window and Lydia looked outside immediately after.

In the distance, there were only endless mist-covered peaks, with no buildings or figures in sight.

They hadn’t seen any homes on their way here, although they would occasionally see abandoned house-like buildings, there was no farmland nearby, only areas with long green grass where flocks of sheep were raised. From this window, however, there were no flocks of sheep visible, possibly because of the more rocky terrain.

“Father, is Mother’s homeland like this too?”

“There is one difference. The mountains can’t be seen there, and the wind is particularly strong. However, when I looked at the sky with your mother at the time, it was the same as the atmosphere here.

“In any case, the landscape feels somewhat desolate.”

“I heard that there continues to be a poor harvest here, and the summer weather is nastier and colder than before, which is probably the reason for it.” Indeed, the clouds hang low making it particularly chilly. It wasn’t only today that the sun could not be seen.

The furnace had been lit in advance, keeping the mansion warm.

“But the situation doesn’t seem so bad as what we’ve heard previously, isn’t there still a grassy hill near the harbor? There is plenty of lush grass on the south side of the hill, and there are also newly built houses. It appears to be full of vitality.”

“That is the land that was taken away by outsiders.”

There was a man wearing a traditional Scottish kilt standing by the doorway. This young man whose head was full of conspicuous red hair and a lively personality was Fergus McKeel.

When this clan head’s son saw Lydia for the first time in London, he very discolorously said that Lydia was his fiancée, yet now, he grinned at Lydia and

her father.

Professor Carlton, I didn't expect that I would see you here, your visit is most welcome."

"I don't plan on marrying Lydia off to you."

Father gave him a warning. Fergus shrugged his shoulders.

"I heard it from Patrick. That guy omitted the condition of marriage to obtain the assistance of Miss Lydia. Honestly, he's basically trampling on my feelings."

Fergus voluntarily sat down in the chair, as if he wanted to hang out in Lydia and her father's room.

"But you can rest assured, I will do everything I can to help Lydia, you came here in order to save your fiancé, right?"

He seemed to have already know everything about the situation.

Seeing Fergus not intending to persistently court her, Lydia sincerely breathed a sigh of relief.

"You said 'taken away by outsiders', what does that mean? Didn't you say it just then?"

Lydia sat by the table.

"Oh that? The outsiders fancied the comparatively finer land of the island and then bought it all, thus our livelihood became poorer."

"Why did the land have to be sold?"

"Because of continued poor harvest, even if they borrowed money nothing could be done, the landlord had to give up the land. The clan couldn't support all the landlords and farmers who lost their properties, so there are constantly people leaving the island. Small towns and villages have also disappeared immediately afterward."

Having said that, Fergus suddenly formed a solemn expression.

"The outsiders are raising sheep, because it's the easiest way to make money. They have turned the suitable farming land into a pasture, then we farmed on the barren land, barely making a living. Regardless of which clan, the situation was all the same."

The changes on the islands were unable to be completely understood at first glance, but it seemed to drive out the people who established their livelihood here centuries ago.

"Above all, it was especially serious three years ago, as there were many

people who died because they couldn't survive the winter."

The head of the clan said this at dinner.

Gathered in the dining room were the important figures among the clan, but

Lydia wasn't clear about the situation in detail.

Almost all of the men were wearing formal Scottish kilts and had long beards, therefore everyone looked very much alike. Lydia just barely knew that the one sitting in the centre was the clan head. Fergus was beside him, and Patrick sat at the very end.

"Excuse me... I heard that many people died in the village that Aurora used to live in, was it during that time?"

Father asked.

"Yes, but rather than saying it was a famine, it would be better to say that the village was actually destroyed by sluags. Just because the clans were related to fairies, they were targeted by the Unseelie Court."

"I remember Aurora's younger brother was the village head at that time and he had also passed away."

The clan head's wife stated.

"The survivors had immigrated to other places and that village no longer exists."

The heavy atmosphere surrounded the area. Although Lydia scooped up soup, she did not drink it.

*Bang....* The sound of Fergus' seat colliding with the table reverberated.

After the surrounding people watched him say "I'm sorry", he continued on with his meal, not thinking much of it. Laughter came out one after another. As if taking this as a signal, everyone finally noticed that it was meal time now and began to move. Lydia saw this and drank a mouthful of soup, relieved.

As soon as their gazes met, Fergus revealed a faint smile to her.

"Even so, we have already lived here for several centuries, regardless of what we ate or wore, it was all obtained from this land, but it's the first time encountering such a severe situation. Unseelie Court will appear every night, snatching the lives of humans, livestock, crops, and various life forms."

"Excuse me, the sluags won't harm the foreigners?"

Lydia raised the question, and the person who replied was Fergus.

"It's just that the outsiders haven't realized it. The workers they hire would keep changing, and they won't live here for a while; if the domestic animals

become weak, they would immediately buy new ones. At any rate, the obvious effects that emerged began after the livestock ate the grass on the islands these several years."

"The other clans on the island are also unable to understand the effect that the fairy magic caused, many of the island's various deeply rooted traditions were abandoned in the past hundred years."

Father nodded. He had asked the question in place of Lydia and so she slightly tilted her head.

"Yes, Lydia you should know Prince Charles Edwards' rebellion, right? Because many of the Highland's soldiers stood with the Prince, Britain's management of the Highlands was quite strict afterwards."

Prince Charles... That's right, Prince's organization originated from that war. Lydia noticed the connection with Prince and the Highlands again, so she was very startled.

It's because of this that Patrick would know of the Prince's existence, therefore Prince also sensed a crisis impending on the Prophet.

"The Highland's peculiar culture from the past was banned, and traditional kilts couldn't be worn, but now it's already been settled."

Fergus added:

"The so-called traditions once gone can never again return. Only the McKeel clan is now left to continue on maintaining the dealings of the past between humans and fairies."

The clan head's sharp gray eyes turned towards Lydia.

"So, we can only choose to protect this island from the hands of the Unseelie Court."

"Why would the Unseelie Court have such formidable strength?"

*Does nobody prevent it?* Lydia looked inquiringly at the people around the table, then the clan head replied to her question.

"Our opinion is unanimous, that the possibility is related to the Prince of Calamity beginning to act."

Sure enough, the problem came from that "Prince".

Lydia remained silent, intending to be a listener.

"It's just as Professor Carlton said, during Prince Charles Edward's rebellion, there were many Highlanders supporting him. Perhaps they believed that at

least he was the Prince of the Stuart Family, as well as a Scottish royal, and would be more suited as their king compared to the Hanover family from Germany, who assumed post as the United Kingdom's king. But supporters here in the Highlands were divided into two factions; us Highlanders originally thought the Scottish royal family was merely a foreign king."

The clan head was quietly and carefully forming these words.

"However, the Prince was an extremely charismatic figure, and because of it, the Highlanders greatly admired him. I think you all already know, the one that was said to support the United Kingdom on the surface, yet secretly sheltering Prince Charles, who lost the war and fled to France, is a powerful clan living in the Hebrides."

Father nodded, and Lydia felt as if she also heard this before.

"The problem lies after that. Unwilling to give up, the United Kingdom tracked down the rebels and kept the Highlands under strict supervision, and along with the rebels' loyalty towards the Stuart royal family, they wanted to fight back. The subset of people dreaming to retake the throne and prevail began to gather. They began to plan revenge on the royal British family and it involved the use of occult like magic methods."

They were gradually approaching the main subject, but even so, the clan head still spoke with a consistent tone, continuing on without a change in his feelings.

"I don't know all the details, but it was said that Prince Charles had an illegitimate child. They considered that child as the new prince, and revered him as the heir to the throne."

"But even if he was really the flesh and blood of the Prince, he had no rights to the throne by succession."

Father spoke, to which the clan chief nodded and raised an objection.

"In any case, they were not a group of normal people. Since they used black magic, how can they casually use it? Wouldn't there be laws relating to the use of it? As long as they believed that the child was Prince Charles's illegitimate child, then it was enough."

"Indeed, what you said isn't wrong."

The clan head looked towards Patrick, as the following subject ought to have something to do with magic.

Patrick stood up in order to continue the topic.

The fairy doctor of the McKeel family was amongst that group of rebels. He used knowledge related to Unseelie Court, which was passed down from the clan and had always been deemed taboo, and granted an infant magic."

"Magic...?"

Patrick looked at Lydia who mumbled.

"It's a magic that's able to make someone proficient in Unseelie Court magic and become their leader. Because the person who was granted magic wasn't an adult who could distinguish right from wrong, but rather an innocent child, that child was probably raised into a monster who couldn't understand love and was without conscience."

Lydia felt a shiver go up her spine.

"That child is the existence called the Prince of Calamity."

This was the kind of person who had tortured Edgar to this day.

"The McKeel family gambled on the clan's reputation to look for that fairy doctor, and then arrested him. That man was finally executed. He was the only one who knew the secrets of the Unseelie Court, so the precious knowledge that was imparted to us was lost following his death."

Patrick stood in the position of a fairy doctor, and seemed to feel awfully sorry about this.

Having knowledge related to fairies was a fairy doctor's weapon, especially when encountering Unseelie Court. Especially knowledge in relation to the Unseelie court, then that reason alone was enough to protect oneself from it, if one were to have the knowledge of evil magic.

Be that as it may, Unseelie Court were never close with humans in the past, so their magic and characteristics were a mystery. Nearly all of the fairy doctors only knew a little bit about the way to respond when encountering an Unseelie Court.

On the other hand, if humans could manipulate Unseelie Court magic and abuse it, then it would create a serious situation; this was an indisputable fact.

Because of this, even if there was a fairy doctor on earth who knew this secret art, they would only cautiously convey this knowledge to a few people.

"The Prince's organization couldn't be captured?"

"They escaped. In the end, we only know two things; the Prince of Calamity and

his organization made a contract with the Unseelie Court, and is using fairy magic to plan vengeance against the United Kingdom. It is said that the organization's stronghold is here in the Hebrides."

The people here didn't know that the Prince's organization was stockpiling funds in the United States and gradually preparing the plan for revenge. But Lydia felt that she shouldn't speak of the matters relating Edgar to the Prince's organization. Likewise, they probably don't intend on completely trusting Lydia without reservations.

"They must be treating this place as a stronghold, right?"

This is the birthplace of the Prince of Calamity; its association with him is deep compared to other places. Perhaps the Unseelie Court felt the Prince's reserved power on standby, only then would they gather on this island. If the Prince calls them, they will most likely assemble here from all over Britain."

Their numbers may exceed by far the Unseelie Court that the Prince gathered at London Bridge previously.

But Lydia was still able to remain calm, because she had heard that the Prince had died.

The person calling for the Unseelie Court should have already passed away, but the Unseelie Court gathering on the island autonomously was enough to cause grief to the residents.

"Then, can the Prophet really withstand the Prince of Calamity?"

Patrick looked at the clan head, who answered the question.

"The Prophet, who lies dormant in the holy swamp, will wake up and rescue us one day. This is a very old legend, and no one knows how long it's been passed down for. And it is purely a legend so we do not have any clues to be able to determine whether it is true or false."

"However, another of the McKeel clan's fairy doctors who was proficient at the time, thought of accumulating power that opposed the Prince and covering it up as a legend to prevent it from being discovered by the Prince's organisation."

Patrick took over and continued the subject once more.

"In order to not let the fairy doctor, who inherited the secrets of the Unseelie Court, head down the wrong path, the McKeel family had someone in charge of safeguarding them; that person was the one who of course voluntarily became

the Prophet."

"Since he was able to act as the watchman, was the person who became the Prophet more powerful than the one who inherited the secrets of the Unseelie Court?"

"I heard that in terms of ability, the most outstanding fairy doctor would be able to inherit those secrets. Another person would only have the ability to beat him, it's plausible that he possesses some other special ability that can withstand fairy magic."

"That man is asleep in the sacred land, right?"

"He obtained the Aurora fairies' assistance, and planned to introduce fairy blood into the McKeel branch families. You and your mother are both descended from the families that the Prophet chose."

Aurora fairies are Aurora spirits, and are also fairies of light who drive away the darkness. Perhaps in order to withstand the Unseelie Court, he selected advantageous fairies and made a contract.

Originally, there ought to have been many humans who were able to awaken the Prophet, after all, the outset of this plan was in order to have the people with this ability not disappear. However, because everyone was related and lived in nearby villages, the bloodline was cut off.

Apart from Mother, who abandoned the island and eloped at a distant place. *This was such an ironic matter.* Lydia felt this to some extent as she and her father looked at each other.

"However, Mr McKeel, Lydia and Aurora aren't the same — she's my daughter, and so the fairy blood in her body should be very faint. If it happens that she has an insufficient amount of fairy blood, wouldn't it be dangerous?"

Father took a cautious approach.

"There won't be danger, the Unseelie Court are unable to enter the sacred land, and I will also go with her."

It was not the clan leader who asserted this, but Patrick.

"I will go as well. Father, is that alright?"

Fergus spoke up, but the clan leader frowned.

"Fergus, you cannot enter the sacred land so you won't be able to help at all."

Patrick spoke over the next clan head nonchalantly.

"However, in order to not let anyone get in the way, someone will be required

to keep watch outside. Father, please let me command the clan's soldiers."

"It's only logical that we need someone to guard the ritual, but it will be decided later who will go."

"Aren't I Lydia's second fiancé?"

"Miss Carlton is just helping us this time and nothing more. She isn't the Prophet's fiancée, and has nothing to do with you, isn't that right, Professor Carlton?"

The clan head sought Father's approval.

"Yes..... that's right, Lydia has a fiancé already."

The point of them not letting Fergus come in anyway made Lydia to somewhat mind, but she thought this shouldn't be a big problem.

At this moment, the dining hall's windows shook and reverberated unusually. Rather than saying it was the sound of wind, it was more of a buzzing-like vibration.

After that, the glass cracked open, and something flew into the room. Something like a sphere of light became the appearance of a human that crouched on the ground, with its long orange hair emitting a faint glow.

"Brian...?"

Half of his appearance maintained the stance of a fairy, his hair fluttering despite the lack of wind and his body glowing slightly.

Several people stood up to help Brian to his feet.

Patrick ran over immediately, as if to say something to Brian secretly.

Lydia stood up hastily.

"Brian... are you alright? Where's Edgar? You guys weren't together? What's going on?"

She ran over and grabbed hold of Brian as she asked.

"Lydia..."

He raised his head and opened his mouth, but seemed to have no strength.

"Let's ask later, he needs to rest first."

"He's okay, right? Please, tell me!"

Lydia leaned forward, despite Patrick blocking her.

"Yeah..... he's still alive....."

As Brian was brought out of the dining hall, his shoulders supported on both sides, these were the only words Lydia heard from him.

Afterwards, Lydia had finally gotten news that Edgar was still in the enemies' hands, Brian escaped after much difficulty, and that the Prince's subordinates had already come to the island in order to take the Prophet's life, yet no one gave her more detailed information.

\*

Outside the window was the grey sea underneath the gloomy skies and the vast horizon with distant scenery that couldn't be seen clearly. Even the horizontal line had unknowingly fused together subtly with the sky's colors.

There were islands of the outer Hebrides on the other side of the sea; the Prophet was asleep on the island where Lydia's mother once lived.

Edgar pondered while gazing into the distance, where no silhouettes of the islands of the inner Hebrides could be seen.

This was an isle located in the Hebrides, and although Edgar arrived here with Brian via the fairy passage, Brian took advantage of the rift and escaped.

At first, Edgar did not think that Brian would be continuing to travel with him, so him escaping was an inevitable matter.

Upon entering the small town, he could not bind him or threaten him with the sword while walking.

It's just that he wanted Arrow to chase after Brian and confirm the direction he went in, but in the end, Brian, who was afraid, turned into a fairy and flew past the passage. Arrow said that because he was half human, flying in the human world would be very strenuous.

Arrow didn't enter the McKeel clan's territory where Brian escaped to, so he turned back. That place seemed to be filled with magic that made it difficult for outsider fairies to trespass.

Arrow said that Edgar needed to take the sword with him or else he will not be able to intrude into that place alone no matter what. In any case, the situation turned out like this.

"Lord Edgar, the Connaught clan head asked whether or not you were alright with the long distance journey."

Raven informed him, as he came over to his side. Edgar had just finished breakfast so it was the perfect timing.

This was Mr. Connaught's mansion. Edgar was originally planning to head to the Hebrides, but he also prepared to visit Mr. Connaught at that time. Although it

was a little ahead of time, after Brian had escaped, Edgar headed to the Connaught clan and arrived in the small town last night.

The Connaught clan head had of course been very welcoming to Edgar.

“Ah, that’s good. We can go and take a look at his land.”

“Then I will go and ask them to prepare.”

As Raven spoke, he noticed the sword standing upright against the chair.

“Arrow has returned.”

“Yes, it seems that Brian returned to the McKeel clan. Furthermore, there is another important matter.”

Raven watched Edgar intently.

“Lydia has already gone to the McKeel home in the outer Hebrides, Arrow said that he sensed Lydia’s engagement ring nearby.”

“As expected, Patrick.....”

“Yes, he probably fooled Lydia cleverly and took her to the McKeel home, planning to make her go to the Prophet.”

If the matters were as Brian said, then Lydia’s lifespan will decrease as long as the Prophet awakens. Concerning this point, Lydia ought to have not been informed.

“We must stop this.”

“Yes.”

He was itching to break into the McKeel home at present and take Lydia away. As long as the full moon passes, they would have to wait another nineteen years to wake the Prophet.

By that time, the situation on the island and the McKeel clan’s troubles may change, and the chance of them needing Lydia should also be reduced.

However, there was also a chance that the Prophet may wake up of his own accord, and since the McKeel’s crisis was imminent, this possibility was higher.

During that time, the Prophet would surely think of a way to obtain Lydia and seize Edgar’s life.

He needed to bury the prophet before it awoke, or else it will be difficult so he could only bet on the opportunity of the full moon at night.

He cannot rush things.

In order to solve the surrounding problems one by one, maintaining friendly relations with the Connaught clan head was very important.

Edgar calmed his emotions as he left the room.

Mr. Connaught was very pleased that Edgar had come to the island so promptly. In order to maintain the clan's livelihood, he needed to obtain funds as soon as possible, and nothing was better than gold to aid in the plan emerging sooner than expected.

He and Edgar rode along together, during the introduction of the islands and the spectacular view. The scenery was quite good; the more he saw the wilderness and rocky hills that lacked the signs of human intervention, the more he was able to sense the relentlessness of nature.

In fact, it was clearly early summer now, but even if farmland was seen, there were only crops grown in poor conditions within. Mr Connaught stated that there will be very poor harvest this year as well.

"The only harvestable crops are potatoes, I don't know if we'll be able to get through winter this year."

Despite him happily receiving Edgar as a visitor, patrolling his own land still affected his mood sure enough.

"Only the grazing sheep seem to be thriving, how is the situation in that aspect? I heard that the price of wool is very high now."

"Ah, almost all of the sheep are owned by outsiders, we couldn't destroy the farmland and village like them and convert it into a sheep husbandry. We aren't like them, where as long as the workers have a place to live then it's fine. The clan still has women, children, and elders; for us, the food and residence that allows the clan to survive cannot be given up."

"Indeed, when becoming head of the clan, one shouldn't be purely obsessed with making money like a businessman."

Edgar nodded sympathetically.

"We cannot make money unless we have a considerable amount of wool, and if the farmland is lost, many farmers will lose their jobs. Many farmers have already had their land taken away by outsiders, thus they had no other choice but to leave the island."

He was unable to change the current situation, and so he came to London in order to seek financial aid. But Edgar was unable to provide assistance in a situation without prospect.

"Mr. Connaught, you ought to understand, right? If you don't make some

changes and loyally keep everything the same, then it will be very difficult for me to lend a hand. If it's hard for the clan to be self-sufficient, it must produce something that can be sold outside of the island."

"However, the reason why outsiders can earn money via sheep husbandry is because they are able to process the wool into fabric. Even if we increase the number of sheep, we can only sell the wool for a cheap price."

"That's right, just sheep husbandry is meaningless. You need to add additional value to the sheep first. Even without mass production, as long as there is value, you can make a good sale."

Mr. Connaught lifted his head slightly, as if he had felt a glimmer of hope. Edgar rode forward slowly while discussing alongside him.

"As long as you purchase a loom and produce woollen fabric in the clan, then you will be able to make better sales compared to selling wool. You guys already possess traditional weaving techniques, as long as you can increase the production rate, people will have work. Do you know how many people in the city want new fabrics? They want to wear both comfortable and beautiful clothing that no one else is wearing."

"That is..... Earl, could you please assist us in this aspect?"

"I said from the beginning that I would be willing to provide assistance, because I want to preserve the good old traditions."

Edgar gave an elegant smile.

The Connaught clan head's blushed as looked at Edgar. He was completely charmed.

He should have not minded earlier that Edgar was too young.

So long as he could move the hearts of people just a little, Edgar knew exactly how to urge them to take action.

"But I have one condition. Rest assured, it's nothing difficult, but it's merely because of some personal affairs that I would like to ask for your help."

"As long as it is something I can help with, I will be sure to do my utmost."

He agreed without any objections, seemingly more worried about Edgar changing his mind rather than the details of the condition.

"You know of the McKeel clan, right? "

"Yes, of course. Our clan has land at the outer Hebrides, and those regions are adjacent to the McKeel clan's land. "

“Then your clans have been neighbours and have been corresponding since the beginning?”

“Well, you could say that. If it’s there are clans on the island, the different clan heads will know each other, it’s just that the McKeel clan is somewhat individualistic.”

“Yes, I also get the impression that they’re quite odd. Their behaviour towards me in the past was somewhat rude.”

Edgar felt that the Connaught clan head’s dubious feelings towards the McKeel clan, so he deliberately used negative words.

“Yes... it was said that they were a bit separated from reality since the beginning, and recently they have said that the poor harvest was due to the Sluaghs.”

It seemed that Mr Connaught was relatively able to speak the truth.

“Sluaghs?”

“I heard that they are departed spirits that linger in the night, the dreadful fairies that everyone on the island knows of.....”

He was afraid of fairies. But he probably knew that speaking openly about fairies was immature, thus he spoke of it hesitatingly.

“I don’t dislike the topic of fairies, you mustn’t forget that I am the Earl of Ibrazel.”

After Edgar spoke frankly, Mr Connaught gave a smile of relief.

“Yes, that was disrespectful of me... to speak bluntly, the McKeel clan have passed down many anecdotes about getting close to the fairies, they believe that their family’s ancestors first came from the country of the Aurora borealis.”

*I see, Edgar mumbled.*

It was the same as what Brian had said. There were only three human clans proficient in fairy magic, the McKeel clan was the last survivor.

“Um... having said that, Earl, what is happening with the McKeel clan?”

“Well, in fact..... to put it simply, the son of the McKeel clan head has feelings for my fiancée, so I am a bit troubled.”

“Indeed, that will not do.”

“I must protect my fiancée’s reputation, and for this reason, I hope that you will help me.”

“Of course, it would be a great honor for us to be able to help you and your

fiancée.”

Mr. Connaught readily assured him.

At any rate, everything had been progressing according to Edgar's plan so far.

What should be done next? Edgar thought quickly.

Although he could only look at the situation while taking action, what was most necessary for now?

“Thank you very much. I have several things to ask for, but first could you please prepare a ship to head for the outer Hebrides?”

“That is not a problem at all.”

“Furthermore, after arriving there, could you please look for a woman for me? I hope that she's a clever, capable, and fearless woman, and if possible, I ask that you keep this confidential.”

“Lord Edgar.”

Raven, who followed behind at a distance, interrupted, seeming to not have much to add.

“What's wrong?”

“.....No, it's nothing.”

He spoke while looking away, discontent.

\*

Lydia was able to directly speak with Brian, as it was already the next day. Even when she wanted to visit him, Patrick would stop her, using the reason that he was unwell. Today, she glanced down at Brian from the windows walking alone, and so she hastily chased after him.

Lydia had finally caught up with him at the road ahead, by the long and continuous wooden fences.

“Brian!”

Hearing Lydia's voice, he stopped.

“Call me onii-sama.”

He still wanted to continue playing the brother and sister game? Lydia thought this, but called him once more in order to accomplish his desires.

“Onii-sama, where are you going? Patrick had just said that you had fallen asleep, and so I couldn't talk with you.”

“Ohh, that was because I didn't want to be questioned constantly, so I didn't want to see anyone. But Lydia is different, yet Patrick, that kid doesn't

understand.”

He laughed and took a step forward.

“But are you okay?”

“I’m fine already.”

Brian said that he did not want to be questioned constantly, but Lydia, who overtook him, wanted to ask questions, yet he walked alongside her without the slightest hesitation. Lydia did not say anything, so he spoke first.

“You wanted to ask about Edgar, right?”

Lydia nodded sincerely.

“Honestly, I’m not too sure about Edgar’s situation because he was confined in another place, but he’s truly still alive.”

Brian said smoothly. Lydia didn’t know at all that what he said was hastily covered up with the help of Patrick last night.

Although he was alive, he was confined. As Lydia thought this, she was anxious to the point of having difficulties breathing.

“What kind of person was the Prince’s subordinate?”

“I didn’t see their face, because I was surrounded by demon dogs.”

“Were Raven and Edgar together?”

“That valet-kun? Probably. Lydia, they will surely be saved. Doesn’t Edgar have a magic sword? Those guys want to use the sword to kill the Prophet, so if only Edgar uses the sword, they won’t harm him.”

Lydia nodded. She didn’t spend any extra efforts pondering whether or not she was being deceived.

Brian arrived at a tower west of the mansion, opened the iron gate and went in. This was an ancient tower, with stone steps extending upwards in a spiral.

“The scenery up top is very beautiful.”

Lydia sensed him inviting her, and followed him up the stairs.

Brian, afraid that she would slip, held out his hand. After Lydia grabbed his hand, her body suddenly felt light, and went up the stairs lightly, as if she grew wings.

Having this kind of feeling was probably an effect of the Aurora fairies’ magic, who fluttered in the sky.

“But Brian, if you escaped, the Prince’s men don’t know where the sacred land is, so what are they going to do?”

Lydia asked as they walked.

“Those guys should know the place, but perhaps they’re not sure where the entrance is, which is safeguarded by magic, so they wanted to use me. But no matter what I do, a person without a predestined relationship to the sacred land cannot go in.”

“Is that so? Are you saying... that they cannot enter the inside of the sacred land, where the Prophet is located?”

“The sacred land is inside a stone circle, the Prince’s subordinates cannot enter, unless he himself sets out..... But they intend to use Edgar, so they are likely unaware of that. As long as the Prince himself doesn’t think of sneaking into the sacred land alone, they won’t be able to stop us.”

“The Prince himself can enter the sacred land? Why?”

Brian stopped and turned his head, as it was unknown when the stairs had ended.

As long as one approached the rectangular cutout window, the island’s scenery below would suddenly become wide, as if the admirer became a bird.

In the distance, there were mountain peaks with drifting fog, there was a bay deeply cut into the land ahead, and the houses everywhere looked smaller than dollhouses.

“I really like the scenery from here.”

Aurora fairies dwelled in higher places, so it was no surprise that Brian would say that.

“Right now, I can’t fly to such a high place, but the sacred land will be filled with magic on the next full moon, and the sky world will be closest to the ground. Even if I am half human, I should be able to become a full Aurora fairy and return to the sky. When the time comes, even this island will seemingly become very small.”

You could undoubtedly stay in the McKeel family as is. Although Lydia thought this, Brian had eventually inherited strong fairy traits, and his dreams of returning to the sky were very special to him.

“Lydia, a long time ago, Aurora fairies fell to the ground, on that mountain peak. It is said that the fairies who were attracted by the beauty of the islands and stayed there were the McKeel family’s ancestors.”

“Then everyone in the McKeel family is related to Aurora fairies?”

“Yes, we are all the same, regardless of how close our blood ties are.”

Brian bore hints of loneliness, but he smiled faintly, and then pointed to the most prominent mountain peak.

“The sacred land is at the other end of that mountain. It can be reached by flying straight from here, and below should be the swamp and the stone circles.”

Even if one can see it, not everyone can enter.

“About the Prince being able to enter...”

Brian seemingly remembered something as he replied to the question Lydia just asked.

“Because he was born on the sacred land.”

“What?!”

She once heard that the Prince had been born on the island, but she didn’t expect that it to be that place.

“However, that’s because people imbued the abilities of manipulating Unseelie Court magic into babies, right? Unseelie Courts can’t enter the sacred land, so how will he be able to manage?”

“The sacred land is an area where magic is strongest, that’s for sure. What’s special is that the region’s most sacred aura is concentrated there. However, the sacred land also has a shadow, the sacred stone circle’s shadow magic is linked together with light of the sacred land, like two sides of a coin. That is where the Prince of Calamity was born.”

“....Even so, Brian, that was one hundred years ago, the Prince born at the time doesn’t exist anymore.”

“The Prince’s successor is the same as the person himself.”

The successor should also have died, and the remaining members of the organization would have no way of entering the sacred land.

“If they cannot get in, those guys will lie in ambush outside, and try to use Edgar to kill the Prophet when he comes out. But as long as the Prophet awakens, regardless of whether Edgar is threatened or manipulated by those guys, we can save him.”

Brian’s tone was very flat, as if he was narrating a script that someone taught him, but Lydia’s heart only relaxed at the point where Edgar could be saved. She nodded strongly, as she felt motivated.

The wind blew as Lydia and Brian who were standing side by side, making their hair flutter.

The handkerchief in Brian's breast pocket was almost blown away, Lydia quickly grabbed hold of it, bursting into laughter.

"It was nearly going to fly away."

"That's....."

Brian suddenly had a complex expression. Lydia found she had seen the handkerchief before.

"Is this... Edgar's handkerchief....?"

"Ah, I was bitten by demon dogs, and Edgar tried to help me stop the bleeding."

Brian was illuminated by the sun, so the wound that was originally flowing with blood had disappeared, and the handkerchief didn't have a drop of blood.

"I'll return it to you, because I don't know if I'll have another chance to see him again."

He wanted to return to the sky, so even if Edgar was rescued, there wasn't a chance for them to meet again. Lydia interpreted it like this, thus she nodded frankly.

Brian hurriedly looked away from the handkerchief. Was it her imagination? Even so, this handkerchief, in Lydia's eyes, was certainly a sign that she would be able to see Edgar again.

"He's unexpectedly a good man, isn't he?"

Lydia who did not know anything, said this easily.

"When he confronts onii-sama, perhaps there is some distrust, but he really values the people around me."

Brian frowned, as if he felt pain somewhere, but then, as if reinvigorated, said with a laugh:

"You really like him."

Lydia blushed, nodding her head in an honest and unprecedented manner.

"Don't you think he's arrogant and suspicious?"

"In the beginning, I really did think that. But although Edgar has gone through many difficult experiences, it made him be able to change into a variety of different facades, but he truly is a very considerate person."

Brian had once thought this during his childhood, if his sister was going to get married one day, and smile from the bottom of her heart, perhaps he would be

a little lonely. But at the same time, would he be able to be influenced by her happiness?

Since his sister lived in the human world, her fiancé must be human, but he expected the man to be a rough, outspoken, Highlander.

In reality however, it was entirely different.

He was an annoying English noble. If it was merely this, then it could be forgotten, but he was a man who was proficient in Unseelie Court magic, and could unexpectedly use a sword that could kill fairies; not only that, despite him seeming to bear some complicated circumstances, it was an undeniable fact that he was linked to the organization causing the Hebrides to get caught up in a crisis.

How could he bless this relationship?

*However, it couldn't be helped.* Brian said to himself.

After all Lydia had never been his sister.

Although she clutched onto Edgar's handkerchief, smiling shyly, he knew that she would never get a chance to return it.

Patrick was taking Lydia to the sacred land not to save Edgar. Edgar, who came in order to kill the Prophet, couldn't enter the sacred land, and thus would be killed.

Lydia would probably hate the McKeel family. Even so, she was still a fairy doctor. As long as she was close with the Seelie Courts and retained a fondness for them, surely she would be willing to help the Prophet in order to protect the island.

Recognizing that she did not have much of a future, surely she would be even more desperate to complete the fairy doctor's mission.

That was what Patrick thought.

However, because Brian knew Edgar and Lydia better than Patrick, he felt a bit doubtful, but he had to dispel these doubts.

Brian thought to himself, were their feelings for each other only to such a small extent?

"Hey, wait a minute."

Someone called to Brian, he stopped at the side of the well. He had just returned from the tower to the mansion and had parted ways with Lydia.

Looking back, he saw Fergus standing there, hands crossed over his chest. His

short red hair looked like a flame, was it because he was angry?

“Why do you want Lydia to call you ‘onii-sama’?”

“Am I not allowed to?”

“Your sister died even without being exchanged with Lydia, isn’t that so?”

Brian’s family had all been killed by Unseelie Courts a year ago. He stayed at the clan head’s mansion in the human world, rarely speaking with anyone other than Patrick.

Nonetheless, news of the clan members living in the fairy would naturally be told to the clan head, and surely as the successor, he heard it from his father.

“It doesn’t matter. At any rate, she could have originally become my sister.”

“Huh? Don’t be stupid, you obviously believe that your sister was killed because of Lydia.”

The sentence suddenly opened up Brian’s wound, and he fell silent.

Sorrowful memories emerged from the depths of his heart. It was because Lydia’s mother — Aurora refused to have her child exchanged and came to retrieve her daughter at the time that Brian’s sister had lost her future.

If she were able to grow up, she would have certainly been very beautiful and would discuss love, but she died before experiencing these things. In human years, she was just five years old at the time.

Brian jumped and seemed to step away, but Fergus blocked his way, standing in front of him.

“Hey, what’s going on in the end?”

“I don’t think it’s Lydia’s fault, if I had to say, it should be Aurora’s fault.”

“You really hate her.”

Brian turned to face Fergus and glared at him.

“So what....! My sister was born lacking fairy traits, her body was unable to adapt to the magic air that the fairy realm possessed. Up until that point, our clan once had such a child born, and at the time, as long as the child married in the human world and conducted an exchange then it was fine. This was an inevitable rule, but Aurora refused the exchange. Not only did she take Lydia away, but she also thought of a way to make us unable to act. If my sister was able to live in the human world, she would have been able to live much longer.”

“After the exchange, were you not able to meet with your sister...? In fact, the McKeel clan living in the fairy realm, apart from the time of conducting

exchanges, they cannot make contact with the human world, isn't that so?" What he said was right. Brian had managed to escape from clutches of the Unseelie Court and was saved by Patrick. It seemed that he was a special case, as he was able to stay in the human world as a half-fairy.

He certainly knew that this was the clan's rule, and understood that once his sister was exchanged, he would no longer be able to see her.

*But even so...* Brian clenched his fist.

"....I hoped that my sister was able to live. As long as I'm able to imagine her grown up as an adult now, as long as I can imagine her smiling happily in the human world, that would've been enough..."

Brian really treasured his sister, who was unable to fly, and also spent most of her time bedridden.

Living in the world of fairies, even if one's possessed pure human blood, their fairy traits would become stronger. Although the clansmen of the same race would become aware of their siblings, they wouldn't harbor special feelings for their kin. For Brian, even his parents were indifferent.

However, he and his sister felt each other's blood connection, and he felt that she was an irreplaceable existence.

Perhaps they were similar. They were similar in that they couldn't completely turn into fairies.

His younger sister had few similarities to fairies which made her feel lonely and act spoiled with him. Brian knew it was his duty as an older brother to take care of her, thus he was unable to receive human warmth within the fairy clan, and so he received warmth and satisfaction with this kind of feeling.

During that time, the McKeel clan in the human world didn't have a child suited for the exchange, he could only watch his sister gradually become frail, so when Brian found out that the elders had discovered where Aurora was living, and heard that she had given birth to a child, he felt very happy for his sister.

"Lydia is healthy, she would have been able to survive even if she was in the fairy realm. Furthermore, if she was able to stay by our side, perhaps she could have awakened the Prophet earlier, perhaps our village would have not been destroyed by the Sluagh."

It's true that the separation was painful, but Brian thought that his sister could have been saved this way.

“Even if I hate her, so what? You’re the same, if Lydia didn’t become the Prophet’s fiancée, you wouldn’t be troubled!”

The feelings that he originally wanted to suppress burst forth once more. Brian snarled at Fergus.

“I heard that you like her? Don’t forget that you’re just as guilty as me, you’re wanting to sacrifice Lydia for the clan too, isn’t that right?”

“Sacrifice?.... What do you mean? Hey, there are dangers in awakening the Prophet?”

Seeing Fergus surprised, Brian couldn’t help but laugh.

It turns out this boy doesn’t know anything. Even if Patrick confronted the clan head’s son given that he was troubled, it seemed that he was able to lie nonchalantly.

“Not really, why would there be anything dangerous?”

He answered with contempt and Fergus frowned more angrily.

“What kind of mischief are you and Patrick up to?”

“Mischief? If it wasn’t for your father’s permission, we wouldn’t be unable to change a single thing in the clan!”

After spitting these words out, Brian left, as if wanting to get rid of Fergus.

No one noticed the the shadow surrounding the stone wall of the well, as there was a grey tail that protruded and then quickly withdrew as if nervously retreating.

# Chapter 5: Because of how one cares for his beloved

“Hey Lydia, why are you here?”

The sound came from the window, and Lydia, who was staying by the warm furnace, hastily rushed over.

“Nico! Is that you?”

As soon as the long-haired gray cat jumped in from the window, Lydia hugged him.

“Geez, why did you suddenly disappear?”

“Oh stop it, Lydia, you’ll ruin my hair!”

She snuggled her face up against Nico’s body, and he kept twisting and turning even more.

“I was so worried that you wouldn’t come back!”

“Yeah, I’m sorry that I just left like that... I heard the fairies say that you were here, so I came to make sure.”

Despite being tightly hugged by Lydia, Nico still treated her like a child, and placed his little paw on her head.

Nico who had lived a long time, still viewed Lydia as a child even though she had grown taller than him.

Under Nico’s comfort, Lydia finally relaxed. Nico barely managed to burrow out from her hands, he stood on the table arranging his crooked tie and said:

“More importantly, I heard about some important information.”

“Important information?”

“It’s very important! As I thought, Brian isn’t really your brother, because there were no changelings at the time.”

“.....Is that true?”

“Yes, I heard that guy talking with Fergus. Lydia, you had better watch out for that Brian kid. Although he says he’s your brother, he might really hate you deep down.”

Hearing so many things all of a sudden, Lydia sat down collapsed onto the chair in a state of confusion, so she could properly listen to what Nico had to say.

The efforts Lydia's mother had gone through for her, resulted in the indirect death of Brian's sister having not gone to the human world. Everyone wanted to protect someone precious to them, but it was unfortunate that someone had gotten hurt.

"By the way Lydia, did you not believe that you were the Professor and Aurora's child? So why did you come to this island? Did you still want to be a softhearted person? Brian wanted to gain your sympathy and easily deceived you into coming here."

Brian treated Lydia amicably on the surface when in fact perhaps he really detested her. Lydia remembered she also felt he was like a brother a little; her heart was in pain.

But there was no other way.

In no way did Lydia come because she sympathized with the McKeel clan.

"Nico, a lot of things had happened when you were away. Edgar was taken away by Prince's subordinates, it was like he's being forced to kill the Prophet. However, they ought to appear at the sacred land, only at that time we can save him."

With a troubled face, Nico shut his eyes, thought for a moment, then opened his eyes again.

"The things you're telling me..... are they the truth?"

"What do you mean.....?"

"Did Brian and Patrick speak the truth? What if the Earl wasn't captured?"

"But his and Raven's whereabouts are unknown, would they leave without telling me a word if they weren't captured?"

Nico sighed, jumped down from the table, hung his shoulders and began pacing back and forth.

After walking around the room, he sighed again.

"Lydia, at least Brian clearly knows that you're not his sister, but he also deliberately lied you to get close to you, it would be best if you don't trust those guys. Don't get involved with them and leave the island at once."

"Then what about Edgar?"

"As long there's a house to stay in, he will contact you. Don't forget that no matter what happens, the Earl still wants to marry you."

"But perhaps he encountered a situation where there's no way for him to

contact me, the demon dogs really appeared! They must be Ulysses's subordinates. The small goblins saw Edgar and the demon dogs get swept into the fairy realm too!"

Because Lydia looked like she was almost going to cry, Nico sadly looked at her fixedly.

"Ugh, I'm surrounded by idiots....."

He was suddenly at his wits' end.

"Hey Nico, what's wrong? You've been acting very strange recently, suddenly saying you wanted to go home, is there something troubling you?"

Usually, as long as Nico's fur was slightly disheveled, he would mind, and yet he lowered his head, not caring that it was a complete mess. Then, he suddenly looked up and said:

"Lydia, we're sneaking out of here tonight."

"We're leaving? But it's going to be a full moon soon, and I have to awaken the Prophet."

"That's the problem, doing so could be dangerous, the McKeel clansmen seem to be hiding something. I beg you Lydia, for the last time please do as I say."

"For the last time.....what do you mean?"

"Although Aurora had asked me to look after you, I've been thinking of whether or not I should soon return to this island."

Lydia had vaguely felt it before, but it shocked her knowing that Nico had seriously thought about it.

"You want to follow the Earl, right? No matter what happens, you won't change your mind, right?"

Even so, as long as Nico seriously asked a question, Lydia would answer earnestly.

"Yes, I will not change."

"You were always like this from the start.....once you decide, you won't change your mind."

"Hey Nico, I knew that following Edgar would be risky and I knew that he always provoked you..... But he means no harm, for Edgar, it's proof that he's close to you. I will have a proper talk with him, and tell him that he has to treat Nico like a gentleman. Besides, that's right! You've been getting along with Raven, haven't you? That's why..."

“Lydia, it’s not like that.”

Nico moved towards the window, stretched his body and gazed out.

“The longer you live, the more distant the past memories become and cannot be remembered. I already can’t remember the time when I first lived on this island, nor do I know why I was alone. But whenever I see those foggy mountains, the same, usual feeling that I felt a very long time ago will arise, as long as I stay here, then someone would come and see me.”

“Do you want to return here and wait for someone?”

“I’m really not sure, perhaps no one will come. But as long as I stay on the island, I don’t have to think about the future and have a leisurely life. Whether it’s Aurora or the Professor’s home, or yours and the Earl’s home, neither will forever be my home.”

A human’s life was very short; his good friend Aurora passed away, and Aurora’s daughter, whom he protected for so long, was about to marry and leave the nest. Perhaps Nico felt depressed at this sudden change.

Because as long as he had relations with humans, he would always have to experience this kind of sad farewells.

Lydia knelt in front of Nico.

“If I leave this island, will I be not be able to see you again?”

“It’s best that you don’t come here, you should cut off relations with the McKeel clan, like Aurora once wanted to do.”

*Should I really not have come to this island?* In order to protect Lydia, her mother resisted the McKeel clan’s traditions at all costs, but Lydia actually came here, and perhaps this would ruin her mother’s efforts.

Then what about Edgar?

If what Patrick and Brian said was true, then she wouldn’t know what would happen to him if Lydia ran away.

Even so, should I heed Nico’s advice?

“The Earl will definitely return. I don’t understand that guy but he won’t abandon you. Even I know that.”

Lydia took his hand.

“.....Nico, I will do as you say.”

Although Nico was both cowardly and heartless, and always wanted to run away, he was without a doubt worried about Lydia.

Compared to trusting Brian and Patrick, she would logically prefer to trust Nico. Although if this happened, she will never be able to see Nico again. She never doubted that Nico would always be with her, and the reason why Lydia, who had no human friends, didn't feel lonely was because she was accompanied by Nico at her side. Compared to other fairy friends, Nico was more understanding of humans, so despite him being a fickle and unruly fairy, Lydia felt that they could communicate their true feelings with each other. When Lydia felt Nico's soft little paws, tears fell from her cheeks. Nico used the paw that wasn't held by Lydia to wipe away her tears.

That night, Lydia explained the situation to her father, and decided to quietly sneak out of the mansion.

During the time that everyone had already gone to bed, the two of them tidied their luggage and waited for the opportunity to leave the room.

At this time, there was a knock at the door.

She was startled, the people of the mansion usually wouldn't visit at this time. Father urged Lydia to go into the bedroom with his eyes.

Lydia slightly opened the door that connected to the bedroom, to watch for her father from the inside deal with the visitor.

“Who is it?”

After Father asked, Patrick's voice came from the other side of the door.

“Sorry for coming so late, may I bother you for a moment?”

The door opened and Lydia caught a glimpse of Patrick's pale face.

“Oh my, haven't you rested yet?”

Patrick asked this after seeing Father's clothing, but he himself was dressed in his day clothes.

“Well, yes..... I plan to search for stones. Did you know? Some minerals under the moonlight will apparently be different colored during the daytime, and can be found in this kind of place, which relatively has many stones.”

Father made a clumsy excuse, not knowing what Patrick was thinking.

“Is that so? The stones are mundane things in our eyes, you really are worthy of being called an expert.”

“Um, then may I ask what your business is?”

Patrick handed the cage in his hands over to Father.

“Night patrol discovered this outside and remembered that this ought to be

Miss Lydia's friend."

In the moment that Lydia saw a gray tail in the cage, she then rushed out from the bedroom.

"Nico!"

She snatched the cage, carefully took Nico out and held him up in her arms. It felt like he had less of an existence than usual, his presence was so pale that his body appeared to be translucent.

"Nico, what happened? Hang in there!"

He was completely unresponsive.

"His soul seems to be bound by magic, maybe the Prince's subordinates were around."

Lydia glared at Patrick, who said this.

Her intuition was that it was the McKeel clan who did this to Nico, or rather Patrick himself may have done it.

He must have discovered that Lydia was trying escape, and also knew that Nico was going to lead the way for them, so he intended to prevent it.

"Hey, Mr. Patrick, please undo the fairy magic, you can use fairy magic, right? Please, restore Nico."

"Unfortunately, it is impossible for me. However, Miss Lydia, don't worry, as long as he is brought to the sacred land, he will surely recover."

His lips made a slight smile and Lydia trembled as she felt his strong intention of bringing her to the sacred land no matter what.

At the same time, this also meant that Lydia was most likely being deceived by them, like Nico had said.

Having the Prophet awaken was perhaps dangerous, moreover, they were definitely hiding something from Lydia.

Yet she could not refuse, as Nico was clearly being treated as a hostage.

"Professor, is your daughter interested in minerals too? The both of you wanting a parent-child walk in the middle of the night doesn't matter, but it's very dark outside, so please watch your step."

Patrick sarcastically pointed out that Lydia didn't change into her pajamas, then left the room.

Father sighed.

"Lydia, what are we going to do?"

“I can’t abandon Nico.”

Lydia held the limp Nico close to her chest, determined to protect him.

\*

The largest island of the outer Hebrides was located north. Edgar rode the Connaught family’s boat and arrived at this island, which he heard was where the village that Lydia’s mother formerly resided was located. After he disembarked, he first headed for the Connaught family’s land.

Edgar stayed in the mansion of the clan head’s aunt, who resided here during her life. At the same time, he was puzzled about one thing; as soon as he arrived on the island, he saw something unusual.

There were unknown black creatures that would occasionally cross the sky; Raven said that he could not see it, and it seemed like no one else could either. The sky was always cloudy and the sunlight was most pale, and yet the shadows were awfully distinct. It was like a gaze could be sensed from the clumps of bushes, thickets and from the shadows of the building.

*Could it be..... fairies?*

Were they gathered at a distance observing Edgar, who had connections with the Prince?

It was futile for Edgar to judge.

Although the Connaught family had a fairy doctor too, they were only proficient in exorcisms and incantations, and seemed to have never dealt with fairies directly.

Could it be that in this day and age, fairy doctors like Lydia, who were loved by fairies, or like the McKeel clan with a strong force were relatively uncommon? The island’s wind was very strong, as the windows of the old house rattled incessantly. Edgar sat at the table by the window, writing a letter near the light of an oil lamp.

Finally, he signed the letter and sealed the envelope with wax.

“Raven, mail this letter to the head butler tomorrow morning.”

Raven entered the room and went to Edgar’s side.

“Tomkins will faint.”

Even Edgar himself was surprised as he mumbled.

“In that case, I will send restoratives over.”

“That’s a good idea.”

“Have you already decided to offer a loan?”

It was an inconceivable amount of money, perhaps it will be like throwing it all down the drain.

If the Connaught clan’s wool textiles were able to establish an industry, and operations were able to proceed smoothly, then there certainly wouldn’t be any problems. However, Edgar intended to personally kill the Prophet, who was said to be able to save the islands.

Once the Prophet is gone, the island will be covered with Unseelie Court magic, and the failing crops and diseases will become more serious. The Connaught family wanted to rebuild the clan’s livelihood, which ought to be quite difficult. Once the situation becomes like this, Edgar’s investment would of course be subject to significant loss.

“If I can’t give Lydia a life of luxury, do you think she will be disappointed?”

“I don’t think Miss Lydia would mind.”

“....Is that so? Then how should I secure Lydia?”

If she knew about Edgar’s hidden secret, would she no longer accept him?

Edgar couldn’t stop thinking about whether or not her feelings will fade. Even so, he had decided to use all means at his disposal to keep Lydia at his side.

“Even if there’s no way to send jewels, I should be able to send flowers everyday if it was that.”

“Lord Edgar, I will learn how to grow flowers if that were to happen.”

“You want to learn to be a gardener?”

“Yes.”

Edgar smiled at Raven’s serious face.

“Okay. Then I will also become a gardener. If the two of us build a garden for Lydia, she will be very happy.”

It’s because Lydia was selflessly softhearted with everyone that Edgar would be saved by her.

After all, Edgar could only entrust his hopes on her kind heart.

He would continually plead Lydia to stay by his side, whether it was out of sympathy or compassion, as long as her heart was moved by him then it was fine.

Edgar knew perfectly well that there would be a loss in giving favors to the Connaught clan, but he needed a trump card that would rival the McKeel

family.

He had to protect himself and Lydia, so he needed to prevent the island's clans from joining forces and considering him as an enemy.

The Connaught family was one of the clans that possessed power in the vicinity, and if the money was used as an investment to keep them on the same side, then that sum was definitely not high.

"Raven, there's nothing happening tonight, you can rest."

Edgar sat back at the table once more, preparing to write to Lydia while thinking about how he could send the letter to the McKeel house.

But Raven was reluctant to leave, and he saw Raven about to say something, seemingly puzzled.

"Lord Edgar, I am not a good liar."

"I know that."

"So, if Miss Lydia found out, it would be terrible."

"What will she find out about?"

"Your affair."

Edgar was deep in thought. *Did I have an affair recently? No, there shouldn't be. But there's a big difference in opinion between men and women, so what degree of action is considered cheating? What did I do at Mr. Barrett's party?*

"Ahhh, Raven, can you tell me, when and where did I do something?"

"It will happen from after this."

"After this?"

"Earlier, you asked Mr. Connaught to send a woman over."

"Uh, that was..."

"Earl Ashenbert, may I come in?"

The sound coming from outside the door was the voice of a young girl.

After Raven walked over and opened the door, a plainly dressed girl raised her skirt to curtsy.

"I came under the instructions of the clan head, if there's anything, please do not hesitate to order."

She had her hair tied back in a long braid, and seemed to be about Lydia's age, but perhaps due to her simple appearance and nervous demeanor, she looked only about fifteen or sixteen. Her entire body was slightly trembling.

*So that's how it was.* Edgar glanced at Raven while thinking watching his serious

expression. Moreover, he unknowingly stood by the bedroom door, as if he didn't want people entering, and didn't appear to plan on leaving. If he was ordered to, would he be reluctant to obey, so to speak, would he resist Edgar for the first time for Lydia? Edgar wanted to test it out and see, but now was not a good situation to waste time, thus he changed his frame of mind and said:

“Well, what’s your name?”

When Edgar spoke to the girl, she unexpectedly raised her head in a determined manner.

“My name is Kelly. I served the Connaught clan head’s aunt in this mansion previously.”

“Are you bold and hardworking?”

“....I do not know, but I will do as Earl wishes.”

He could see that she was very brave. She should still be a pure girl, suddenly being asked to go into a strange man’s room and instructed to obey him regardless of what he requests.

Since she had decided to take such a risk for the clan, she ought to comply with Edgar’s requests as well.

Edgar couldn’t help but laugh.

“How reliable, Mr. Connaught seems to have sent a woman in accordance to my request. But Raven, both you and him seem to have misunderstood me.”

Raven tilted his head in confusion.

Edgar got up and walked towards the girl, and the pair of brown eyes pursued Edgar’s actions; it was said to ignite the passion of people, but it was too innocent.

“I’m not looking for comfort at night, but actually, it can be explained in this way too.”

“There is no other explanation.”

Raven said muttered.

In fact, the only person Edgar was concerned about was Lydia.

“However, since you have come specifically for this reason, then I will respond to your desire.”

His fingers touched the girl’s chin, and the valet’s stare pierced his back.

“....I was joking, Raven.”

Edgar left the girl's side and began pacing around the room while thinking about what to do.

But there was no time, and the actions that could be taken were limited.

"Kelly, I want to save my fiancée. First, I'm going to ask you to take a trip to the McKeel home."

Despite the girl not understanding the situation too clearly, she still nodded.

\*

*Hey, Edgar, what are you doing?*

After entering the greenhouse at the Earl's mansion, there was a scent of lilies. There were amaryllis, gladioli and many other fragrant flowers. Lydia was attracted by the scents and headed into the depths of the greenhouse.

*Edgar, are you there?*

*I'm here, Lydia.*

After hearing his voice, Lydia let out a sigh of relief.

She saw Edgar in the flower bed, and a butterfly resting on his elegant blonde hair.

*Lydia, come here, the tulips are going to bloom.*

Edgar rolled his shirt sleeves up and held a shovel in his hand.

Raven was watering the flower beds; the water droplets reflected the sunshine flowing and entering the glass dome, forming a twinkling rainbow in the sky.

*It's like a dream. I'm probably dreaming.*

*Hey, when did you become a gardener?*

Edgar burst into laughter.

*This is a gift for you.*

*It's really beautiful.*

*If you like this gift, then can you grant me a wish?*

Not knowing when, Lydia was nestled in Edgar's embrace. He gazed at Lydia with his hands around her back, laughing happily. Just then, he suddenly frowned sadly.

*....Please don't get close to the sacred land.*

As he hugged Lydia, her cheek rested against his shoulder. She noticed that the scenery around them had suddenly changed.

This was the wilderness of the night.

She looked over Edgar's shoulder to see Nico hazily floating mid-air.

In a weak voice, the thin and transparent Nico said:

*—Lydia, get away from the island.*

The moon, which swept past numerous mountains, was nearly full.

*Lydia, I'm afraid. I'm afraid that I'll lose you if this continues on.*

Edgar's voice rang in her ears, making her feel a pain in her heart.

Lydia, who was uneasy, woke up from her light sleep due to being unable to breathe.

Raven and Edgar weren't by her side; this place was the McKeel clan's guest room. Even though she knew her father was in the next room, she still felt a cold loneliness.

She tried turning around and saw Nico, sitting like a doll by the window where the glimmer of dawn drifted.

Even though he would occasionally wake up and move, Nico, who's soul was bound, did not speak. Even if his eyes were open, he just stared into the distance, and furthermore, his body was still slightly transparent.

“Hey Nico, was I mistaken?”

*Edgar, what should I do? Where are you?*

*Tomorrow is the full moon.*

“Excuse me! Is anyone here?”

There was a sound coming from the front of the mansion.

This visitor came really early, but it had nothing to do with Lydia.

Although she could hear the sound of the servant's annoyed response, she laid back in bed and closed her eyes once more.

*Edgar, I too... don't want to lose you...*

\*

“The one sent by the Connaught clan?”

Fergus ate a big mouthful of the bread he was having for breakfast while looking at Patrick.

“Fergus, after assuming the position of the clan head, the etiquette of British customs is necessary.”

Patrick frowned, but as usual, Fergus was not bothered.

“Father is still very healthy.”

In the mornings, everyone in their clan would have their breakfast at different times, so currently Fergus and Patrick were the only two sitting at the table.

“Anyways, it’s still quite rare, what business do they have?”

“They want us to split the medicine with them. The Connaught clan chief’s aunt used to live in the east coast. Her daughter who was her maid, said things like being troubled by not being able to collect medicinal plants.”

“Who’s sick?”

“It seems like it’s some kind of illness spread between farmers that gives rise to a cough.”

He used goat’s milk to swallow the hard bread.

“How troublesome, the situation is getting worse everywhere.”

He left as soon as he had finished his breakfast, and Patrick stopped complaining too.

After leaving the room, Fergus headed to the reception room. Usually, there were very little chances for him to meet girls from the other clans, so he was interested in seeing what kind of person she was.

But there was no one in the reception room. As Fergus was about to leave, he saw a figure heading up the stairs at the corner of his eyes, and so he chased after them.

“Hey you, where are you going?”

The girl with braids looked back in surprise. Fergus caught up with her and said: “Casually wandering in other people’s homes, is that the Connaught clan’s etiquette?”

“I—I’m sorry... they wanted me to wait for the medicinal herbs to be prepared, and I was a bit bored.....”

The girl anxiously hung her head.

Fergus didn’t want to scold her, rather he only wanted to call out and stop her.

The girl’s scared expression made him frustrated.

“Uh, it’s alright, it’s just that the guest’s room is on that side.”

“Excuse me, about the guest.... I saw a young girl just now, she shouldn’t be a woman from the clan, right? Because she was wearing a British-styled dress.”

She looked up quickly and asked, as if she was very interested.

“Oh, you’re talking about Lydia?”

“Would it be inconvenient to meet her?”

She seemed to be interested in a girl of a similar age to her. Fergus thought to himself that it wasn’t surprising for a country girl to be interested in talking

about the subject of British cities and dresses. On top of that, this house didn't have any girls that Lydia could chat with, so perhaps she would be bored. This should make Lydia feel a bit at ease.

"Well, I think it should be alright? After going up that staircase, it'll be the last room."

The girl smiled happily and bowed her head in gratitude.

She was like a child. *Sending this girl here across the inconvenient mountain roads so early in the morning, was the Connaught clan's manpower lacking?* Fergus thought as he turned around; at that moment, he suddenly felt that something was strange and stopped.

*Where had the girl happened to catch sight of Lydia?*

Lydia's room couldn't be seen from the reception room, and Fergus had been in the dining room until just now, so if Lydia had left the guest room, he would have seen her. Fergus was sure he would have noticed if Lydia had passed by. The Connaught maiden unexpectedly knew that this place had a young woman who wasn't a clan member, what exactly was going on?

Curious, Fergus immediately headed to Lydia's room.

After going up the stairs, Fergus heard the sound of talking.

Although he thought doing this was quite rude, he still crept closer to the door to eavesdrop.

"You saw Edgar?"

Lydia's surprised voice came from inside.

"Yes, Miss, Earl Ashenbert is currently at the Connaught residence, so I've come to get you."

"But, is it really Edgar?"

Fergus also immediately felt that this point was questionable.

Patrick and Brian said that the Earl was captured by the Prince's subordinates, could this be a trap?

"The Earl gave me this."

The girl seemed to have given something to Lydia, and there was the sound of someone rising from a chair in the room.

"The Earl said that you've been deceived by the McKeel clan, if it's difficult for you to leave with me, then at least tonight..."

The girl stopped talking midway because Fergus opened the door.

Lydia and the Connaught girl looked at Fergus in surprise.

“You said Earl Ashenbert is in the Connaught clan’s residence? And that the McKeel clan is lying? This is inexcusable. Saying such unscrupulous things, I find you to be insulting.”

“It’s true!”

The girl firmly retorted.

“Lydia, you need to think about it carefully, the person who is said to be the Earl could be someone else.”

However, Lydia stood in front of the girl, as if wanting to protect her.

“That’s right, I have to think carefully about who is telling the truth.”

Fergus glanced at the object in Lydia’s hand. It seemed to be a letter that the girl handed her.

“What’s written inside?”

Lydia hastily hid the letter behind her back.

“This is a letter addressed to me.”

“Maybe it’s a trap from Prince.”

“This is Edgar’s handwriting.”

“Are you sure? Letters can be forged.”

“So what?”

“It must be examined.”

“Personal content is written inside.”

After Lydia had finished, she threw the letter into the fireplace before Fergus could stop her.

The paper immediately caught fire, burning up. After she had confirmed that

the letter had burned completely into ash, she turned to face Fergus and said:

“You don’t have to worry, I won’t escape, I plan to do as you say. However, if you guys dare do something to her, I will change my mind!”

“Then please keep it down, if Patrick finds out, it will be impossible to let her return now.”

“....You mean you’re not the same as him?”

Fergus let out a worried sigh.

If the young girl was involved with the Prince’s organization, and was using the Earl’s name to bring Lydia out, then pretending that it wasn’t important and letting her return was a foolish action.

But Lydia wanted to let the girl leave.

Meanwhile, Fergus was aware that he was merely the clan's fledgling, since he was unaware of the important information that the clan possessed from his standpoint.

Especially since this time's event seemed to be concerned with fairies and magic, he had absolutely no authority to intervene.

Since that was the case, if conversely, Fergus made use of this point, there wouldn't be anyone blaming him.

"Lydia, I'm on your side."

Lydia looked at him dubiously.

"I think Patrick and Brian are hiding something, and regarding the Earl's whereabouts, what they said might not be entirely true. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean that what this young lady said is right."

He shot a glance at the girl, noticing that her shoulders were shaking nervously.

"Even if they are hiding things, they're thinking in consideration for the clan.

After all, this is Patrick's responsibility. He has this kind of belief too, but I don't need to carry that level of responsibility yet, so I think I should be able to stand by your side."

"Fergus, you're willing to keep this matter secret?"

"If you wish."

Lydia finally relaxed her expression in relief, and without knowing why, Fergus felt at ease too. He noticed that he didn't want Lydia to look at him with suspicion.

"You'll let her return safely, right?"

"Yeah I promise, but she had better get back to the reception room and pretend to have been talking with me."

Lydia nodded and took the girl's hand, urging her to leave.

"Kelly, be careful on the way back. You don't have to worry, this man is the son of the clan head, and he wouldn't make the despicable action of violating the agreement."

After ensuring that no one was in the corridor or on the stairs, Fergus brought the girl out of the room.

"Thank you, Fergus."

Lydia whispered at the door.

The two of them were practically close enough to touch, and he smelled the fragrance of chamomile, which gave him an heart-rending feeling for some reason.

“Ahhh, if I had met you earlier instead of that kid.....”

“Um, what?”

“It’s nothing.”

Lydia watched Kelly get in the carriage and gradually grow distant. She finally sighed.

She looked back at the room. The indispensable fireplace that was lit all day, even though it was summer, was nearly out now, but the letter that Lydia had threw in had completely disappeared.

She remembered Edgar’s handwriting.

She had only skimmed the contents of the letter and didn’t read it completely. Even so, the words were still seared into her eyes.

*“The Prophet fiancée’s life will be reduced.”*

It was certainly written in that way.

*“That’s why Lydia, please believe me and do as I say.”*

Patrick and Brian had concealed this matter from Lydia; they said that there wouldn’t be any danger.

Perhaps Nico sensed that something was strange and came to warn Lydia, but he was bound by magic. This was probably Patrick’s doing.

*“Can you leave the McKeel house with the girl who delivered this letter? If you find it difficult to escape or feel that it is dangerous to do so, then I hope to meet with you in another place.”*

If Patrick and Brian still had other things to hide from Lydia, then it would definitely be about Edgar. They said that Edgar had been caught by the Prince’s organization, but the situation didn’t seem to be like that.

*“Lydia, I intend to bury the Prophet.”*

Maybe they had discovered this possibility.

They discovered that Edgar was not being forced by the Prince’s organization, but also wanted to go to the sacred land to bury the Prophet.

*“Because I have to do this, I can’t come and get you right away, but if you are taken to the sacred land, perhaps we will be able to meet there.”*

However, Edgar didn’t know that he couldn’t enter the sacred land.

*“Even if you enter the sacred land, don’t obey them. I will definitely get you out, so you can’t let the Prophet wake up. No matter what happens, I believe you will always be my fiancée.”*

Did he believe that as long as Lydia hadn’t woken the Prophet, he could dispose of the sleeping Prophet?

*What should I do?* Lydia worried while sitting down on an oak chair.

In any case, she could only do as Edgar wanted at present. Lydia did not intend to get involved with the Prophet, and although it was possible that she would be forced to act, as long as Nico entered the sacred land, he could probably lift the enchantment, so it’ll be fine as long as she thought of how to escape.

As long as she could see Edgar, who should be nearby, perhaps he would give up the intention of burying the Prophet and escape with her.

Lydia didn’t know how Edgar was going to even try accomplishing the feat of burying the Prophet within the magical domain of the sacred land.

Lydia was more troubled and worried over the fact that she made Edgar do such outrageous things, even more so as if he was trying to protect her.

He said that he believed that Lydia would always be his fiancée. Lydia had no way of knowing the meaning contained in that sentence and could only think about it.

However, awakening the Prophet definitely wasn’t a bad thing.

But to what extent would the so-called reduction in lifespan be? Indeed, she felt uneasy. However, if the Prince’s organization still wouldn’t let go of Edgar, couldn’t the Prophet help him?

“Edgar... I want to protect you too.”

Nico, who originally should have stayed in the bedroom, unknowingly sat on the table, unable to talk. Even if she looked at him, he couldn’t move, but now, he cared about Lydia in his barely existent remaining conscience.

“I’m sorry Nico, I really couldn’t understand you well.”

Lydia’s mother was very important to Nico, so he stayed by her side.

Nico carefully protected Lydia, whom her mother faced dangers in bringing her back from the fairy realm.

Lydia hoped that this time in her own way, she would be able to protect and love those she valued.

“Lydia, aren’t you bored?”

Brian's voice was heard. He stood by the doorway looking in, appearing surprised as he looked around.

"I heard that you were alone in the room, so I was a little worried, but it's quite lively here."

*Lively?* Doubtful, Lydia looked around the room, and found that the floor was full of flowers and grass.

Piles of clovers, lavender, rosemary and sage were laid on the floor by her feet. It seemed that the fairies visited Lydia while she was thinking.

They had probably sensed that Lydia was depressed, and had come to cheer her up.

She had seen a lot of fairies since coming here and would give them biscuits, but she hadn't expected them to be worried for her.

"You're so loved by the fairies to the extent that it's rare."

"Is that really that rare? Mother was like that too."

"Although fairies trust fairy doctors, but they won't necessarily have a close relationship with them. Like Patrick, although he's very capable, the small goblins are very afraid of him either way and don't dare approach him."

Lydia burst out laughing.

"I think my mother was really understanding with the fairies. But I am still inexperienced as a fairy doctor, the small goblins are just not afraid of me, that's all."

Brian smiled back and looked at Lydia tenderly, tender enough that it didn't seem to bear resentment against her.

Or, for an instant, did he overlap Lydia with his real sister?

"Brian onii-sama, I might have unintentionally hurt someone."

He frowned slightly; Lydia pretended to not notice and looked at Nico.

"Nico too, I always believed that he would always remain by my side, and I never asked what he thought. Moreover, Edgar was willing to accept someone as immature as me, so I just don't wish to hurt him."

As she pondered, she picked up a clover by her feet.

"In order to save Edgar, I will go to the sacred land."

"Lydia..."

Brian opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but kept silent.

"This isn't for the clan. Onii-sama, you also ought to understand Edgar's strong

points a little, right?"

Brian had Edgar's handkerchief, so the matter of being bitten by demon dogs should be true. Edgar and Brian were in correspondence before, so even if Brian hated Lydia, she believed that he could understand her feelings for Edgar as well.

"Hey, Brian onii-sama, this is for you."

She handed a clover she had picked up to Brian.

Originally given by the fairies, it was a lucky four-leaf clover.

Brian was about to leave the ground and head for the homeland of the Aurora fairies. She hoped that the happiness that he obtained could exceed the things he had lost.

Brian took it, noticed that it had four leaves, and looked at Lydia.

"You need luck too, right?"

"Regardless of whether or not I am a changeling, I have been a happy person from the beginning."

Lydia gave him an honest smile.

# Chapter 6: Those that gather in the holy land

When Kelly returned to the Connaught home alone, Edgar could not hide his disappointment, but said it was to be expected.

He asked about the situation at the McKeel house, finding out that Lydia had not been imprisoned, but it seemed that she was being monitored by the people in the mansion, so it would really be difficult for her to go out alone. There wasn't much time left, it seemed that he could only rescue Lydia at the sacred land.

After Edgar had made up his mind, he borrowed a horse from the Connaught clan, preparing to leave for the sacred land. He needed to get there before the moon rose tonight.

"Earl, do you really want to go to the McKeel house alone?"

"Yes, the McKeel clan should have people who can speak English, so it shouldn't be a problem."

Of course Edgar didn't want to converse with the McKeel family, but he had told Mr. Connaught as such.

"We can negotiate with the McKeel family for you and have them return your fiancée."

"No, the situation is a little more complicated. That man might injure her because of his impatience, so I will go alone first."

Mr. Connaught's thick eyebrows knitted together, and he nodded solemnly.

"I understand, then I will first prepare a ship to leave the island. As long you reach the inner Hebrides, it will be hard for the McKeel clan to act."

"Yes, please take care of me."

Regain Lydia, kill the Prophet. Once he had done this, Edgar would undoubtedly be pursued by the McKeel clan, so the method of leaving the island was very important.

"Earl, I'm very sorry that I cannot help you."

Kelly looked very anxious. This young girl with her hair tied back in a braid gave people a plain impression, but she was certainly a hardworking person.

"You've already done so much for me."

Even though Edgar stated as such, she was still unconvinced and lowered her

head.

“It’s fine as long as Lydia saw the letter.”

“Yes, although she only had a bit of time, Miss Carlton had indeed read the letter.”

“Then my thoughts were surely conveyed to her.”

She was afraid of the letter being taken away and had thrown it into the fireplace. Presumably, she had already grasped the meaning of the contents. Since she had realized that the contents can’t be known by the McKeel clan, she must have understood that Edgar was planning to kill the Prophet.

What was Lydia thinking?

If she knew that Edgar was in fact completely in opposition to the Prophet, would she despise him?

Although Edgar wanted Lydia to believe in him in the letter, he actually didn’t have the least bit of confidence.

However, he could not turn back now.

“Let’s go, Raven.”

The clouds were thin in the sky, would the full moon be seen tonight? Even if the moon couldn’t be seen, the opening of the sacred land wouldn’t be obstructed? As usual, Edgar was still unable to understand magic.

Nevertheless, he guided himself as usual without depending on people, and rode forward on a horse in the wilderness with only Raven.

Ever since he had come to this island where the sacred land was said to be, Edgar always felt that there was a force pulling him in the same direction. He was inexplicably convinced that as long he was guided according to the force, then he would be lead to the sacred land.

Ulysses had said that the Prince knew the correct location of the sacred land, it was probably the memories within Edgar that was pulling him towards there. After Prince Charles Edward raised his forces in the Highlands and fled with the help of a Hebrides clan, the rebellion overthrowing the Hanover royal family vowed to replace him and create the Prince of Calamity. Defectors of the McKeel clan allegedly contributed to this, so it wasn’t surprising even if the first Prince had some kind of association with the sacred land.

Heading towards the north, there was an increase in flat terrain. Even though there were no decent roads, Edgar moved forward through the wilderness as

usual. Faced with Edgar, who was like this, Raven didn't question anything. The summer days were quite long, and the sun showed no signs of setting. Finally, they could see a black standing stone towering ahead. The stone stood in front of Edgar, as if preventing him from going forward. As he drew closer, he discovered something. This giant standing stone was different from the one that he had seen before. It was a giant smoky quartz crystal, which was slightly transparent. He wanted to ride his horse forward, but as soon as they passed the standing stone, he would see the stone in front of him again. It was the same no matter how many times he tried.

“It's a barrier.....”

Perhaps this was a protective charm surrounding the sacred land.

“Lord Edgar, what are you going to do?”

After thinking a little, Edgar drew out the Merrow sword.

“As long as it can break the barrier, then it will be fine. Raven, follow me!”

Edgar raised his sword high and kicked the stirrups. He headed straight towards the upright stone.

As he swung his sword, he felt the unexpected sensation of something breaking.

The smoky quartz then shattered in all directions.

The surrounding landscape suddenly changed.

The scenery around had completely turned into night, and a lake with flashing prismatic lights appeared before him.

As he raised his head, Edgar noticed that it was the scenery of the sky that was reflected on the lake. It was clearly the summer night sky, yet the Northern Lights were flickering.

The moon still hadn't come out.

Only the Northern Lights stretched across the sky on the other end of the lake, like a sign that guided them there.

\*

The carriage stopped suddenly; Lydia almost fell out of her seat and hastily steadied herself.

“Are you alright?”

Brian asked, sitting on the opposite side.

“I’m fine, what happened?”

He stuck his head out the window, and Fergus, who was riding the horse, leaned over.

“Patrick, that kid suddenly stopped the horse, wait a moment.”

Finally, with the consent of the clan chief, Fergus proceeded to the sacred land with them, in accordance to his previous wishes. Taking his status into account, he was, of course, a suitable candidate.

“Did something happen?”

“The island’s guardian stone....”

Patrick still hadn’t finished; Fergus looked forward at the road ahead.

Patrick stood in front and gazed at the standing stone that was upright amidst the empty wilderness.

Lydia stepped down from the carriage and approached the standing stone.

Lydia and the others, who were riding in the carriage, as well as several other McKeel family members on horseback, headed for the sacred land in order to awaken the Prophet tonight.

She sat in the carriage for a long time, and just when she heard that they were about to reach the destination, Patrick had stopped the carriage. What exactly was going on?

“The barrier was broken.”

Patrick said as he stroked the stone’s surface. The upright stone was a dark transparent brown.

It was smoky quartz, but there were distinct cracks inside. There were no cracks on the surface at all, it practically seemed like it was caused by a force from the inside.

“This is the barrier?”

“This is the stone that surrounds the sacred land.”

“The island should also have many identical stones, it’s just that no one knows how many there are, nor is anyone sure of their locations.”

Brian spoke while peeping at the stone from behind.

“The other stones must have been destroyed. Since the destructive force had already affected this area, it means that whoever destroyed the stone succeeded in invading the domain surrounding the sacred land.”

*It's Edgar!* Lydia's had this kind of intuition.

"However, even if it's someone from the Prince's organization, they're unable to enter the sacred land, isn't that right?"

Patrick nodded in response to Fergus's words. The guardian stone suffering damage in this way was perhaps outside his expectations; his austere face expression did not change in the slightest.

"Let's hurry ahead."

Lydia and Brian were urged to return to the carriage.

Before long, the carriage began to move again.

Nico sat in the corner of the carriage. Although he was motionless like a doll, because his body appeared translucent, he looked more like a fairy than usual. Brian used the status of Lydia's 'brother' to ride in the same carriage, and was going to depend on the full moon that came once every nineteen years as well as the power of the sacred land to proceed towards the Aurora fairies' country. It was only natural that Patrick accompanied as the fairy doctor, and Fergus lead the party forward as the representative of the clan chief. Lydia's father did not come along.

The McKeel clan did not seem to want anyone other than those necessary to approach the sacred land, and Lydia thought it was best this way.

If there was a possibility of danger, then it was all the more better.

Before she left, Lydia had secretly told her father about Edgar's letter.

She intended to sneak out of the sacred land with Edgar and Nico, so she hoped that her father would find an excuse to go to the town's port tonight.

As long as they leave the land under the control of the McKeel clan, then they don't need to worry about being constrained and can move freely.

Besides, although they tried to keep Lydia in the mansion, if her father said that he wanted to go shopping and had to leave town by himself, they wouldn't stop him.

*Tomorrow... Can Edgar and Father leave the island?*

Edgar was already nearby.

Thinking this, Lydia's heart began to quicken.

However, she couldn't let Edgar kill the Prophet.

How much of her life would actually be reduced?

If that's the only thing Lydia could do, then she really wanted to awaken the

Prophet for Edgar.

If the Prince's organization still possessed power, the blessing of the Prophet was absolutely necessary if Edgar wanted to obtain true freedom from their pursuit.

However, she didn't want to have any involvement with the Prophet or the McKeel clan again, so she wanted to convince Edgar, hoping that the both of them will leave the island.

Will things go smoothly?

The inside of the carriage unknowingly became dark, as the group was traveling on the road at night.

The Aurora borealis became a veil of light in the sky, stretching to the other side of the hill.

“The Aurora borealis flows out from the sacred land.”

Brian said.

The sacred land on the other side of the hill would soon be reached.

Lydia unconsciously stroked the Moonstone ring on her ring finger, which was proof of their engagement.

“Hey, Brian onii-sama, there's something that I hope you can tell me.”

Lydia asked with a serious tone, so Brian felt confused.

“What will happen to me after the Prophet wakes up?”

“Eh..... What do you mean?”

“If you consider me as a sister in the least bit, don't keep me in the dark. I have the right to know the risks beforehand, don't I? I won't run away.”

She looked straight into Brian's eyes, and he answered with a sincere look.

Then, he slowly said:

“Rather than saying it's dangerous... it would be better to say that your lifespan will be supplied to the Prophet. You're still young and very healthy, and I think it won't take effect immediately... but your remaining lifespan may be shortened.”

In other words, perhaps there would be more time remaining in her lifespan than she thought. Lydia was a little relieved.

She was unexpectedly excited to get married.

While the wedding was being prepared, they had decided to wait until returning from Scotland to hold the ceremony.

*I want to see Edgar again, I want hurry up and return to London and marry him. There should be enough time for me to become his spouse.*

After the carriage ascended the hill, the swamp surrounding the stone circle could be seen below.

The slender standing stones were arranged in a circle and looked as if they had been hammered onto the sacred land. There was a stage made of rocks in the center of that stone circle, as if the megaliths were placed horizontally. Lydia looked around, but couldn't see anyone other than themselves. The direction of the swamp was too dark to see clearly. Did Edgar really come? Lydia placed Nico by the corner of the stone circle. As long as the moon reached the holy land and filled it with magic power, the magic would automatically be undone.

Patrick brought Lydia to the front of the stone stage. From that point of view, the position of the throne-like full moon could be seen from below the stone stage.

“The moon will soon descend to the top of the rock and the door connecting the sacred land will open, but only the three of us can go inside.”

He was referring to Lydia, Patrick and Brian, as only those who had deep ties to the land’s magic could enter.

“In order to defend against attack of the Prince’s subordinates, I will ask Fergus and the others to stand guard here. Please don’t worry, even if Earl Ashenbert was taken as their hostage, I will guarantee his safety.”

But Patrick should have known that Edgar hadn’t become a hostage of the Prince’s organization at all, as he intended to bury the Prophet alone.

Therefore, he brought the soldiers with him to be on the lookout for Edgar. But even if Fergus and the soldiers weren’t aware, they won’t let anyone approach to the area.

Regardless, Edgar and Raven were unable to enter the sacred land, so no matter what they did, it was impossible to kill the Prophet.

Lydia could only pray that Edgar would not act recklessly.

She stood in front of the stone stage, and everyone stood still and waited. As the moon moved little by little, the group could only stand silently and watch. But the moon surely seemed to be descending towards the stone stage.

In ancient times, the stone remnants that were built by humans to meticulously

calculate the movement of the moon in order to take the heaven and earth's energy and use it as black magic. Lydia was experiencing the ancient knowledge once again.

The surroundings were filled with a holy atmosphere; simply from breathing quietly, something was permeating her body. From the tips of her fingers to the end of her hair, she was wrapped up by a mysterious force.

The megaliths weren't a remnant of the past; it was still living.

Lydia sensed its breathing with her whole body and gazed at the stone stage, enthralled.

The juxtaposed stones which resembled pillars and well as the stones spread on the ground emitted a white light under the illumination of the moon, and the reflected radiance filled the surroundings with a dim light.

However, the more the radiance of the light could be felt, the more distinct and dark the shadows of the stone circles that fell on the ground became.

As Lydia gazed at the darkness, she suddenly felt a little dizzy.

The scenery appeared to blur. The more she focused attentively, the more she could feel a subtle distortion of a clear presence.

There was another circle that overlapped with the surrounding stone circle.

That circle repelled the bright moonlight, casting a deep shadow on the rocks.

This was said to be the other shadow of the sacred land that was identical both inside and outside.

Every nineteen years, there would be a maximum build up of magic in this place, and the originally divided sacred land would overlap at this moment.

As the moon descended onto the stone stage, uniting heaven and earth, light and shadow together, will the sacred land reveal it's true and complete form?

Now, everyone was motionlessly waiting for the time to come.

At that moment, Patrick turned in surprise.

A figure on horseback appeared outside the stone circle.

“Edgar...”

Lydia whispered.

Edgar was not looking at Lydia, but at the clan soldiers in front.

The radiant blonde hair glowing underneath the moonlight seemed more divine than the sacred land whose complete form still hadn't yet emerged, yet the sword in his hand bore a dark color, not reflecting any light.

A scarlet star ruby was adorned on the sword. When the star sapphire turned red, it meant that the Merrow sword had the magic of the Unseelie Court. Edgar had already planned on fighting.

He urged the horse to gallop with no intention of slowing down, and immediately rushed toward the center of the stone circle.

Raven followed behind.

“Fergus, please stop him!”

“I know!”

As Patrick shouted, Fergus and the clansmen had already turned their horses in Edgar’s direction.

“Stop it, Edgar, Fergus!”

Lydia wanted to run over there, but Brian grabbed her hand.

“Are you planning to run into the middle of the fight!?”

“But.....”

“The moon has fallen, and the entrance to the sacred land is going to open.” Patrick completely blocked Lydia’s sight and pushed her towards the stone stage.

The sound of clashing swords reverberated.

Raven jumped off his horse and leapt onto a man tried to kill Edgar. Lydia glimpsed him dragging down the man from the horse, but because she was caught by two people on both sides, she was unable to look back.

“Lydia, don’t go!”

Edgar’s voice reached her ears.

Confused, Lydia tried to stop.

Edgar was fighting Fergus, and after he waved his fists and shook the other man off, he ran over.

“Edgar, stop messing around! The Prophet should be on your side, so...”

“.....No, I.....”

Edgar came running towards them, planning to pull Lydia back.

At this time, the center of the stone circle was suddenly filled with light. The moment of the moon descending onto the stone stage had arrived.

“The sacred land is going to open!”

When Lydia heard Brian’s voice, she felt her body floating up.

An invisible force acted, too strong for the eye to see, pulling her away from

Edgar's hand.

"I'll be fine, wait for me!"

Lydia shouted, unable to see his figure.

The breeze gently wrapped up her body. Rather than saying this sensation was her body flying, it would be better to say that it was slowly falling.

Overflowing with faint light, the surroundings couldn't be seen at all.

*I must have been taken to the depths of the sacred land.*

While thinking, the feeling of ground unknowingly returned to her feet.

The light slowly weakened, and she could gradually see her surrounding. The surroundings had a stone circle which were the same as the one from before, but the center of the stone circle was filled with flickering light that fluctuated like the wavering water. Only the standing stones floated mysteriously. She had no idea whether or not the swamp, hill, or even the night sky existed.

It was like being surrounded by the Northern lights.

Thinking about this and raising her head, she could see some kind of shining object in the sky lightly dancing.

The Aurora fairies— the Philis Chyris gathered; they were originally from a realm of the distant heavens, and now they seemed to be approaching the sacred land.

Lydia suddenly saw a figure in the stone circle, and Brian appeared in front of her.

He looked up at group of the Philis Chyris shyly and gently extended his hand out to them, who were descending.

*Ah, Brian onii-sama, you're going to leave aren't you?*

Lydia whispered.

He looked over at Lydia, revealing a smile with a hint of loneliness.

Then, he emitted a mysterious light like the Aurora fairies.

*I must complete my duty.*

Lydia pulled herself together and looked ahead.

She saw the coffin; the sarcophagus was roughly placed at the centre of the stone circle.

The coffin was made of white stone, which was very similar to the standing stones of the stone circle.

Just as she was about to walk forward, she heard someone say to her:

“Lydia, you can’t.”

Edgar?

She turned around and gazed into the swaying light; appearing within was without a doubt Edgar.

“I will bury the Prophet.”

“.....Why are you here?”

*Aren’t outsiders unable to enter?*

The scarlet star ruby was flickering continuously as Edgar firmly grasped the sword which had already been pulled out from the scabbard, and looked straight at Lydia.

“Even if the prophet wakes up, he cannot save us.”

“What do you mean?”

“Miss Carlton, get back!”

Patrick pulled Lydia’s hand. He unknowingly appeared from the side and stood in front of her, seemingly wanting to protect her from the hands of Edgar.

“Mr. Patrick, Edgar is not your enemy!”

Lydia wanted to leave Patrick, but he tightly grabbed Lydia’s hand and glared at Edgar with a watchful eye.

“Earl Ashenbert, how did you come in.....?”

“You’re asking me how I got in? Is that so surprising?”

“Those who are able to enter are only the extremely few people connected to the sacred land.”

“..... I see, then I seem to be included by chance.”

Edgar said coldly. His voice sounded sad and even frightening.

“If that’s the case, there is only one conclusion.”

“Is that so? Then you must have guessed right.”

Patrick widened his eyes.

Lydia was confused.

“I didn’t expect.... that you were actually the Prince of Calamity.”

*What are they talking about?* Lydia looked at Edgar and Patrick alternately; both of their expressions were very solemn.

“How troublesome. I wasn’t hostile to you guys at all, I definitely wouldn’t have tried to come here if it wasn’t in order to find Lydia.”

*Edgar..... Is the Prince?*

“You obviously inherited the title of the Blue Knight Earl, at the same time you’re also the Prince.....?”

“This wasn’t what I wished for.”

Did Edgar inherit the position of Prince, who should already be dead?

Lydia felt confused, even a little dizzy.

“Would you please let go of my fiancée?”

Though his tone was quite gentle, he possessed an indescribable anger.

Nevertheless, when Edgar saw Lydia, who was trembling slightly, he exposed a conceding sort of sorrowful expression.

*Edgar is the Prince.*

Lydia was desperately thinking.

If she let the Prophet wake up, he would become the Edgar’s enemy, and he might get killed.

*But then what should I do?* Marrying Edgar meant marrying the Prince of Calamity.

Marrying that evil Prince who was born in order to curse the United Kingdom and who manipulates Unseelie Court.

*Even so, am I able to have the resolve to only follow him?*

Patrick slowly released the motionless Lydia, and then glanced at the Aurora fairies in the sky.

Lydia followed him and looked up, noticing that the Aurora fairies were turbulently creating a vortex.

The light concentrated in the centre of the object that resembled a cloud.

*It’s dangerous!*

The moment Lydia thought this, she broke into a run.

“Edgar!”

A harsh light flashed instantaneously.

As she threw herself towards Edgar and the both of them fell to the ground, a nearby menhir shattered.

“Lydia, are you alright? Hang in there!”

She found herself being held by Edgar. Her shoulder seemed to be injured, with blood seeping out.

But she didn’t feel pain.

“It’s nothing, let’s hurry up and escape.”

Let's get out of here together! In the end, Lydia couldn't think about anything else.

No matter who he was, he was an important person to Lydia.

The two wanted to get up, but the Aurora fairies planned to attack again.

Lydia didn't leave Edgar's side.

"Don't, Aurora fairies! She's the Prophet's fiancée....."

Although Patrick called out, the Aurora fairies still did not stop.

(Fiancée? But that girl saved the Prince of Calamity.)

The sound from the skies reverberated mercilessly.

The next moment, blades of light sparkled once more.

Edgar embraced Lydia; she thought it was too late, and it was impossible to escape.

However, the impact did not appear, and the light immediately disappeared.

Brian fell to his knees before them.

".....Onii-sama!"

"Edgar.....if you destroy that....."

Brian, who was covered with injuries, whispered with a sigh while pointing to a menhir.

As Lydia tried to help him up, Edgar ran towards the menhir.

Edgar waved his sword a moment before the Aurora fairies attacked. As the menhir shattered, the darkness outside spilled into the stone circle.

What seemed to be thick fog had flowed in. It was the Unseelie court that gathered within the shadows of the sacred land.

There were some that looked like small flying insects that fluttered about while others were large groups of Sluaghs. They mixed together with the Aurora fairies. Light and darkness were fighting against each other.

As Lydia sensed the fairy attacks cease, she shook Brian desperately, trying to wake him up.

"Brian..... why did you.....?"

Lydia shed tears, and he opened his eyes slightly.

"Didn't you want to return to the heavens? If you lived as a fairy, you could forget about the pain and hatred on the ground, you'd become free.... why did you do this.....? I'm not your real sis—"

He didn't tell Lydia to not speak, but rather he pressed a finger against her lips.

“..... My sister, I’m glad I met you...”

“I hurt your sister.....”

“I’m sorry..... I lied to you.....”

While still having difficulty breathing due to the pain, he tried to say something again.

“.....I wish you happiness.”

Then, his finger left Lydia’s lips and he helplessly fell onto the ground.

“Onii-sama!”

And yet he should have held a grudge against Lydia.

Lydia cried and constantly called out for Brian, but he was no longer responding.

In spite of everything, he did not hesitate to sacrifice himself for Lydia and protect her.

She didn’t think she had such a value. Her heart was restless.

She wanted to save Edgar, yet Edgar was regarded by the McKeel clan and this island as the Prince, who was the root of all evil.

However, despite the Prince being an abominable existence to Lydia, she inseparable from him because it was Edgar.

“I’m sorry..... I’m sorry, onii-sama.”

She could only say this.

“Stop, Earl!”

Lydia heard Patrick’s voice, and so she looked up in surprise.

Edgar was rushing to the Prophet’s coffin.

He kicked Patrick down, who was trying to stop him, and thrust the sword into the coffin without the slightest hesitation.

The coffin lid was very fragile, as it suddenly crumbled and scattered all over the place.

At that moment, the area was surrounded by silence.

The Unseelie Court seemed to be afraid of the Prophet, so they all retreated.

However, regardless of whether it was Edgar, who was looking down at the coffin, or Patrick, who was struggling to support his body and glimpse inside, both were speechlessly frozen in place.

“The Prophet..... isn’t inside?”

Patrick muttered.

Lydia who timidly came close to the coffin to take a peek, also saw that it was empty.

“Patrick, what is the meaning of this?”

“That’s what I’d like to ask!”

Patrick rudely spat out these words, it seemed that he had finally become uneasy.

The Aurora fairies causing an uproar in the sky gradually moved away, and Lydia felt the magic that originally filled the sacred land become faint like a tide receding.

“The moonlight disappeared from the sacred land.”

Although the moon couldn’t be seen from here, outside of the stone circle, it had surely left the stone stage and sank below the horizon.

The full moon’s magic that appeared once every nineteen years had disappeared.

Edgar turned around, pulling Lydia towards him. Then he said: “Let’s go home.”

“Arrow, lead the way.”

Tiny stars flew out from the sword, leading the two out of the stone circle within the darkness.

“If you return to that place from just a moment ago, Fergus should still be waiting there, so we need to go home elsewhere.”

Seeing him taking a step forward, Patrick deeply frowned in irritation.

“The prophet can’t have disappeared. If he has already awakened, you would surely be destroyed.”

“As I said, I bear no ill will towards you guys, but if you provoke me, I will show you no mercy. If you want to defend the islands from the Prince, then it would be a good idea to not have any implications with me or Lydia.”

“Meaning... you won’t lay a hand on the islands?”

“That depends on you guys.”

“...I cannot believe you. As long as the Prince exists, Unseelie Court will gather on the island and continue to rise in power. If you inherited the Prince’s powers, there will always be a day where you will surely want to fulfill the Prince’s mission.”

“Even if the most fundamental solution to this is my death, I will not die. As long as Lydia doesn’t say that she doesn’t want to see my face, I will continue to live.”

But if one day I can no longer sustain my own self then at that time, I would gladly to hand over my life to the Prophet.“

Patrick fell silent. Edgar and Lydia turned around and prepared to leave the stone circle.

Edgar put his arm around Lydia's waist, embracing her while walking; Lydia also nestled closely against him.

As the two of them walked forward, Lydia began to cry. Edgar used his other hand to stroke the sobbing Lydia's hair.

“I'm sorry.“

He said softly.

“...Something so important, if I had known earlier...“

“Then you don't want to be engaged with me?“

“It's not that! If I had known, I would not have come to the island.“

“Right..... I'm sorry.“

Edgar heaved a long sigh.

“I was very afraid. I was worried whether or not your heart will drift away from me.“

If that was the case, how comfortable would it be for me?

“You won't lose yourself, right?“

“Yeah, I promise you.“

*Then I can only believe.* Lydia said to herself.

What happened afterwards, Lydia couldn't remember.

At that time, she suddenly felt ill, and upon returning to the human world, a burst of intense pain struck her, leaving her unable to stand.

A burning sort of pain made her gradually lose consciousness. At that time, she remembered something.

An Aurora fairy's blade of light had grazed her shoulder, and the pain was from that wound.

Brian also suffered countless wounds like this; she was feeling the same pain as he did at that time. Experiencing this at the same time, she couldn't help but feel that compared to the crises that were encountered previously, death was closer than ever this time.

# Chapter 7: The choice which draws near

Raven was waiting next to the shattered smoky quartz standing stones, in accordance to the prior agreement.

He brought Edgar's horse as well as Nico, who had been set free from the magic. As soon as he saw Edgar appearing holding onto Lydia, he broke away from the battle with Fergus and the others and hastily rushed over.

"Lord Edgar!....is Miss Lydia injured?"

"I don't know, she suddenly collapsed."

"Lydia!"

Panicking, Nico jumped onto Edgar's shoulder.

"What happened? It can't be that she's been hit by an Aurora fairy's blade, right?"

Nico spoke while examining Lydia, who was pale.

"An Aurora fairy's blade? That's right, I remember that there was an explosion of light and it grazed her."

"Ahhh... this is troublesome..."

"Nico, what should I do?"

Nico crossed his hands over his chest, thinking.

"If it's just a scratch, then you might be able to take out the Aurora's crystal."

"Lord Edgar, we should get out of here now. The McKeel clansmen might come after us."

"I understand, let's hurry."

In any case, getting to safety was the priority.

Edgar helped Lydia on board the back of a horse. Because she seemed to lack the strength to hold on to Edgar, he tied her to his own body. They then rode forward as much as possible, their destination being the closest Connaught clan village.

Even so, when they arrived at the village, the brief night was already over.

This area was a small fishing village, and the old landlord, who was related to the Connaught clan, welcomed Edgar and the others into his residence.

The old landlord said he had already heard the chief's instructions from a messenger and immediately prepared a room for Lydia, but the village didn't

seem to have doctors.

"If something happened, we would call a doctor from the neighboring village, but that area is the McKeel clan's village."

The old landlord had a troubled expression, he seemed to know that Edgar had taken his fiancée back from the McKeel family.

"There are no other villages that have doctors? As long as they are a surgeon it doesn't matter, the wound needs to be cut and the foreign material inside must be removed."

"At the port town there's a doctor from the Connaught clan, it's just that it will take you two hours by carriage."

Riding in a rickety carriage would hurt Lydia's body more. The shaking from it would make her wound ache.

It was the same when riding the horse previously, whenever she came to, the severe pain made her suffer and struggle and she almost fell off the horse.

Edgar had made her take opium so she could be brought there in a trance. Even so, her body would still stiffen from the pain occasionally.

"I'll go call the doctor."

Kelly had appeared at the doorway.

"What are you doing here?"

"The clan chief said that if you came here, you would need a woman to look after your fiancée, so I came."

Dawn came earlier in the summer, and although the sky was already turning light, it was still early for people to be awake. She originally should have been resting. Although the chaos may have already woken her, she was dressed properly, and looked ready to start at any time.

"Is that so... however, a round trip takes four hours, correct?"

"It's impossible, Earl."

Nico came over hurriedly, saying:

One can't last that long having been stabbed by an Aurora fairy's blade, the pain will become more and more severe... Lydia will die!"

Edgar headed towards Nico, then kneeled down and looked at him.

"Can she be saved as long as we remove the Aurora's crystal?"

"I don't know. But that sort of thing possesses magic, it will be really painful for Lydia."

Edgar nodded thoughtfully, and then slowly stood up.

“There’s no time to call a doctor, so I will do this myself.”

Everyone was still taken by surprise by this when Edgar began to calmly give instructions.

“Please boil some hot water, and we will also need strong spirits and a clean cloth. Raven, disinfect several knives and bring them to me, and Kelly, I want you to stay here and help.”

Raven headed quickly out of the room, and the old landlord stood up nervously. As the sound of him calling his servant resounded through the house, Edgar said to Kelly, who remained behind:

“Please help remove her clothes.”

“Uh, yes.”

“I can’t watch this anymore.”

Nico rubbed his eyes as if wiping away tears, and stumbled out through the window.

Lydia was lying face down. Edgar moved the oil lamp by his hand and brushed the hair away from her shoulder.

Normally, he would have been tempted to touch the snow-white skin before him, but this time, he was completely unwilling to look.

He checked the wound and found no serious bleeding, as the blood from before had already begun to dry. It was hard to imagine that the shallow wound just underneath her shoulder was causing her to suffer like this.

In spite of this, he put his hand above the wound and felt an unusual heat, as well as a hard object buried deep in the wound.

“Kelly, help me hold down Lydia.”

Although she had lost consciousness, sudden movement would not be a good idea.

For Edgar, it was not that he inexperienced in this sort of situation. There were times when he had extracted a bullet out of his comrade’s abdomen. However, because he knew the one lying down before him was his lover, he was to be expected, nervous.

If it was possible, he didn’t want to leave unsightly scars on her body. He thought that, even though her life was more important, he couldn’t stop thinking about how he would be able to endure it if he saw Lydia anxious over

her scars after recovering.

*Ahh, before I worry about that, what does the structure of the human body look like? There doesn't seem to be serious problems with the blood vessels in this area.*

*It's not a problem,* Edgar thought. Although he had to cut the wound, just having to cut such a small area was considered lucky. He treated the wound carefully.

Lydia unexpectedly kept still, and although she occasionally made a painful expression, she did not have the strength to struggle.

It wasn't expected that the foreign material in the wound was quite small and quite similar to the blood clots, thus it took a lot of effort to search for it.

Even so, the foreign material had finally been removed from the wound, with very little bleeding.

Not much time had passed, but Edgar felt like it had been several hours.

Lydia's pained expression finally faded, and she fell into a deep sleep.

After completing the treatment, Edgar breathed a sigh of relief, but he still didn't want to leave, so he stayed in the room.

The old landlord urged him to rest in the other room, but he wanted to stay by Lydia's side.

This material, which had previously been buried in the wound and was said to be an Aurora crystal, was later found to be a fragment of a bloodstone after washing the bloodstains away.

This was the soul of an Aurora fairy, as well as its magic crystal.

The Northern Lights were shimmering in the dark night. While they were sacred, they could demonstrate frightening powers.

Even when confronting Brian, who was from the same clan, the magic of the Northern lights didn't hesitate to kill him. At that time, Edgar did not understand this magic very well.

When Lydia woke up, she found herself lying on a bed.

This was a simple room, the wooden framework of the beams on the ceiling were not covered, but directly exposed.

*What is this place?* She wondered as she turned her neck and saw Edgar in a chair next to the bed.

He was leaning back in his chair, as if he was asleep.

He wasn't wearing or a coat or tie, and his sleeves were rolled up. Rather than looking like he was resting, it looked more like he was exhausted.

Lydia reached out a hand to touch his hands that were folded in his lap.

His golden eyelashes moved slightly as he stirred. Slowly opening his eyes, Edgar had a surprised expression at first, but then it became a dazzling smile. He narrowed his ash-mauve eyes as he gazed at Lydia, leaning over to gently stroke her cheek.

"Good morning, how do you feel?"

Lydia tried to sit up.

She noticed something when the blanket fell from her body.

She wasn't wearing anything other than her underwear.

"K-kyahh!"

She let out a shriek and pulled the blankets up to her chest, suddenly pulling away from Edgar, who was leaning too close to her, but the bed was unexpectedly narrow and she fell off from the other side as a result.

"Lydia?"

Just when she didn't know what to do because of the pain and embarrassment, Raven seemed to have heard her screaming and rushed in.

"Lord Edgar!"

Then, with a confused face, Raven turned to look at Lydia, who was crouching underneath the bed, and Edgar, who was standing up.

"Ahhh Raven, help me bring that robe over."

After bringing the robe as Edgar had told him to, Edgar went to Lydia's side and draped it over her shoulders.

"Are you alright?"

"I—I'm ok..."

"Raven, it's alright, Lydia was just a little scared."

Lydia took advantage of the moment when Edgar had his back to her, and when Raven also turned, she hurriedly put the robe on.

"Kelly, you too."

Looking inside from the doorway was the girl who had been sent by Edgar a few days ago. Although she looked worried, she nodded after hearing Edgar's words and left.

Wearing only a thin robe was unable to make Lydia feel at ease. She pulled the

blanket closer to herself and then looked up and said:

“Um, Edgar... when did I become like this...”

“I took it off.”

“Eh?! W—why did you...”

“You know, it’s not like I always have secret intentions. I had to take out the Aurora crystal from your wound, Kelly also helped.”

Lydia touched the bandaged wound. Although she only felt mild cramps, it would hurt again if she pressed on it.

“I—is that so..... I’m sorry.”

He smiled and held out his hand.

With him pulling her hand, Lydia sat up onto the bed, while feeling apologetic for her own shriek as if she had come across a pervert.

Edgar stayed aside and held Lydia’s hand, then raised it to his lips.

“But Lydia, I’m your fiancé, this shouldn’t be such an unforgivable thing, right? Besides, don’t you think it’s too late to cover up?”

“What?”

“Because you had nothing to hide last night.”

Lydia was once again red in the face and had tears in her eyes. Seeing her reaction, Edgar couldn’t help but panic.

“Oh no, I was kidding, I was so worried at the time that I didn’t have the capacity to think about many happier things.”

“Didn’t think about many...?”

*Then he thought a little bit? And what did he mean by happier things?*

“That sentence, can you pretend that you didn’t hear that?”

He smiled slightly, and let out a breath that brushed the hair on her forehead.

Lydia closed her eyes, feeling his lips against her forehead.

This lover’s touch was the same as usual, and could apparently make what happened yesterday seem like a little dreadful nightmare.

However, it had been reality.

Edgar had appeared in the sacred land, and that was proof that he became the Prince.

Brian had died, and the Prophet disappeared.

In the end, Lydia was left with matters she did not understand.

“....Why are you the Prince?”

He left a kiss on her cheek, brushing his lips as light as a feather. He stopped at a distance and stared straight at Lydia.

“I am the Blue Knight Earl, I just happened to obtain the Prince’s memories...”

Edgar said bitterly, and drew back from her.

“Obtained his memories?”

“From the very beginning, the Prince has relied on transferring memories to another person and inheriting the same abilities and responsibility as the original ‘Prince of Calamity’. They would destroy the personality of the next person chosen to be the Prince, and then use a magical gem to transfer the memories, creating a person identical to the first Prince.”

Lydia had heard a little about these things before.

Edgar was forced to become the next Prince by the Prince’s organization, but he fled from there and vowed to seek revenge on the organization. To them, Edgar was a failed attempt.

“Did the organization forcefully transfer the memories onto you?”

Edgar slowly shook his head.

“In order to kill the Prince, who took everything away from me, and in order to stop new Princes from being born, I took the initiative to steal the gem.

Ultimately, I seized everything from the Prince, and then it became mine.”

As long as the essence of the Prince; that is, the “memory” continues to exist, regardless if several Princes die, a new Prince can still be created. Edgar probably wanted to sever this cycle.

If Edgar had the Prince’s “memories”, Ulysses and the organization’s members would no longer be able to rebel against England as long as he was unwilling.

On the other hand, Lydia remembered something.

*“If you inherit the powers of the Prince, there will inevitably be a day where you will want to accomplish his goal.”*

She remembered Patrick saying this.

“Does this mean you know everything about the Prince?”

“I’ve been trying to not touch the memories. As long as I do not access the details, I may be able to continue like this.”

*....Although there are some things I know.* Edgar mumbled. Lydia vaguely understood that Edgar had found out something from the Prince’s memories. It was the way to control Unseelie Court magic.

Because of this, Edgar was able to extract the star ruby's powers which were sealed in the sword, and was also able to manipulate Unseelie Court magic. Moreover, this was in order to save Lydia, who was nearly taken away by the giants.

“Are you afraid?”

Although he said this, he did not let go of Lydia's hand. This was just like the usual Edgar.

He wasn't the Prince, but a man who loved Lydia and who would love her with all his heart in the future.

“No, after you told me about it, I was relieved.”

Even if Edgar is the Blue Knight Earl and the Prince, or he isn't both of them, I still love him. Lydia thought so with this frame of mind.

Her body was probably exhausted, as she soon fell into another deep sleep. Although she had a slight fever in the afternoon, it wasn't a big deal. As long as she rested, she would be able to recover quickly.

*I want to go home soon. I must forget everything that happened on the island and get in shape for the wedding.*

Lydia was thinking these things while taking a nap.

The door opened slightly and someone came in.

*It's Nico..... ah, the magic was undone.*

Lydia turned around, Nico came over and looked at her.

“Oh, you're awake.”

“I'm sorry Nico, I caused you to suffer many hardships.”

“...Didn't I tell you to not go to the sacred land?”

Although he narrowed his eyes, discontent, he patted Lydia's head as if treating her like a child.

“However, it's all my fault things got screwed up. I eavesdropped on Fergus speaking with Brian and told you the things I heard, which was discovered by Patrick.”

“The one who cast magic on you really was Patrick.”

“We can't ignore that boy, he will do anything for his clan, but he's also quite proficient in magic.”

“It seems that way.”

However, they had nothing to do with her anymore. The prophet is no longer in

the sacred land, so they ought to have given up on Lydia.

As long as they don't pursue Edgar, they probably wouldn't meet again.

"Hey Nico, can you contact Father? Before I went to the sacred land, I asked him to go to the port town, that town does not belong to any clan, right? I don't plan on returning to the McKeel clan."

"I understand, I will ask Raven."

After Nico's soft hand left, Lydia suddenly felt very lonely.

Nico said he'd stay on this island, had this idea not changed, even now?

Although she wanted to get out of here sooner, this meant that she had to part with Nico.

Lydia was going to spend her life at the side of Edgar who inherited the Prince's memory, she was not in the position to ask Nico to stay by her side.

Although Nico was like a human in many ways, he was a fairy, and was certainly unable to trust Edgar, who had the strength of the Unseelie Courts.

However, Lydia did not want to think about separating with Nico now, she was even afraid to ask whether or not he would leave tonight. He also said that he would be accompanying her before she left the island.

Nico hadn't said anything.

"Hey, is there anything you want to eat?"

"Every time I caught a cold, Mother would ask this."

"Ahh, that's right, I remember that you had medicinal herbs in milk porridge every time."

"That..... no matter what I said that I wanted to eat every time, mother would only let me eat milk porridge. She said chocolates would make people unable to sleep, buttercream sandwiches would cause indigestion, and salted olives will make people thirsty or something."

"Wasn't this all in consideration for your body?"

"You don't have to ask."

Nico found it amusing and laughed out loud.

"That really is something Aurora would do. I had always thought that you really liked to eat milk porridge."

Lydia also laughed.

"Yeah, I really like it."

If Nico wasn't here, Father was the only one left that she could talk to about

Mother.

Nico was different from Father, who usually wasn't home due to work, as he was a friend who lived his daily life with Lydia and her mother.

Lydia sat up slightly, reaching over towards Nico. Although he usually hated being touched, even if Lydia buried her fingers in his soft fluffy fur, he narrowed his eyes as usual and did not move.

"Excuse me, Miss Lydia."

Raven's voice was heard. He entered the room without waiting for Lydia's response, and quickly headed towards the window and pulled up the curtains.

"What's wrong?"

Before Raven could reply, she heard the sound of hoofbeats outside the window, which stopped in front of the residence.

Judging from the mixed noises, there ought to be several people.

Not long after, the sound of a knock at the main door resounded throughout the residence.

"It's someone from the McKeel family."

Edgar came into the room, quietly closing the door.

"Could they be looking for us?"

"They probably believe that they can't let me escape at least. It looks like they don't intend on letting me go no matter what."

*If you provoke me, I will not hold back* – Edgar had made this declaration to Patrick, but on this island which could be said as the McKeel clan's stronghold, he and Raven couldn't do anything alone.

In short, they could only hide and think about how to secretly leave the island. Naturally, the McKeel clan knew this, so they must have thought that now was the chance to eradicate the Prince.

"But it doesn't matter, they can't cause disorder on the Connaught clan's land."

"Is the owner here willing to help us hide?"

"Yeah, that isn't a problem, I've already bribed the Connaught clan head."

"Bribed?"

"I promised to provide them with financing. Since my safety and the fate of the clan are related, they should be happy to help out, it's just that they have to lie to the McKeel clan a little."

He absolutely wouldn't sneak into the enemy camp without a plan with just him

and Raven.

Lydia looked up at Edgar, feeling more surprised than impressed.

Edgar smiled, and then pulled the curtains by the window slightly and peeked outside.

“Look, they’re heading back.”

“However, they might come again.”

“Well, as soon as your physical condition is okay, we can decide on the safest way to leave the island.”

“I’m fine, it doesn’t matter even if I have slight fever, I can take a carriage or boat.”

Lydia rose from the bed. She wanted to go to Edgar, but her footsteps suddenly became unsteady.

Edgar promptly held out his hand, and Lydia held onto him.

“Don’t force yourself.”

It was strange, her whole body suddenly had no strength, even being unable to stand up. Dizziness washed over her, making her feel quite unwell.

“Lydia, you still have a fever.”

*What’s going on?* She even felt that her exhaled breath was very hot.

“No way..... I felt fine just a moment ago.....”

“At any rate, you should rest.”

Edgar helped Lydia lie down on the bed, then covered her with the blanket. He ought to have noticed Lydia trembling.

In fact, Lydia suddenly felt a chill.

“Raven, please ask them to raise the fire in the fireplace to make the room a bit warmer.”

“Yes.”

“Sure enough, perhaps just removing the crystal wasn’t effective .....

Nico mumbled from under the bed.

“What did you say?”

“I’m not too sure either, but it should be like a poison to the human body.”

“Bloodstones are poisonous?”

“That’s a bloodstone of an Aurora fairy, as long as a bit of power remains, the magic will try to eliminate the enemy.”

“.....Lydia couldn’t have been targeted.”

Edgar said angrily, as Nico looked at him with a sneer.

“Earl, isn’t it because you’re by her side?”

*Because Edgar is by my side? So my body is getting worse?*

Edgar painfully gazed at Lydia. Once she opened her eyes, her gaze met his head-on.

“Meaning it is better for me not to be by her side?”

“Edgar.”

*I don’t want this, there can’t be such thing.*

Lydia struggled to prop up her body.

“Please stay here. If the Aurora fairies are targeting you, then that’s the same as targeting me... isn’t that right, Nico?”

Her body’s condition was bad enough to scare her. This was the first time it had occurred, and she did not know what would happen next. But the more she felt uneasy about this, the more she wanted Edgar to stay by her side.

“Ah.... yes, that’s right. It’s the same.”

Nico answered for Lydia. But Edgar looked increasingly worried. He pushed Lydia, who was trying to get up, back into the blankets.

“As long as she sleeps for a bit, she will feel better again.”

“I’ll go to sleep, so please stay with me.”

“Yeah, I’ll come back to see you soon, I asked Kelly to keep you company.”

When Edgar finally left the room, Lydia’s headache so severe that she couldn’t even lift her head.

\*

Fergus arrived before the the room of his father, the clan head and paused, as he heard the voice of Patrick coming from inside.

“Earl Ashenbert and Miss Carlton’s whereabouts are still unknown, is that correct?”

“The search area is expanding. But isn’t there a possibility that they could be in the fairy realm?”

“Taking into account their safety, perhaps they quickly returned to the human world? Furthermore, the passage from the fairy world leading into this island isn’t so easy to reach, so they are still on this island.”

This wasn’t a matter that should be eavesdropped on. Although Fergus had joined the McKeel clan’s full mobilization of search operations earlier, he was

still unable to obtain news of Lydia and Edgar.

However, he was doubtful about this situation.

It wasn't the Prince's organization that had appeared in the sacred land, it was only the Earl and his valet. Although this was because the Earl was the successor of the Prince, this meant that the Prince's organization hadn't taken Edgar as a hostage from the beginning.

If the Earl, as the young girl of the Connaught clan had said, tried to take Lydia back from the McKeel clan, it meant that Patrick had lied to Lydia and brought her to the Hebrides.

Moreover, Brian had died in the sacred land. Although Patrick said that the Earl had killed him, the wounds covering Brian's body made Fergus remember an old legend he once heard, which was related to the Aurora fairy's dreadful blade.

Even though he couldn't imagine that the Aurora fairies would have killed Brian, who was one of them, he didn't think that the Earl killed him either.

The only thing that he could think of was.....

Was it possible that because Brian and Patrick had deceived Lydia together? If he were to assume from the pang of conscience that he felt....

Fergus wasn't surprised at all, at the thoughts that suddenly emerged.

Although with regards to Brian, Lydia was the reason that caused his blood-related sister to die, but after corresponding with her, it was probably very difficult to continue hating her.

Brian might have saved Lydia. Or, if he tried to save her fiancé for her...

Patrick and Fergus' father had clearly twisted the facts into a favorable direction for them.

Thinking about it, it was also inevitable that Fergus would care about Patrick and his father's conversations.

He stood still, holding his breath.

"Did you see Professor Carlton?"

"Yes, he is currently staying at the port town. He said Miss Carlton won't be returning to the McKeel clan. If receives contact from them, he would probably leave the island. Since the professor is still in the town, that is evidence that the two are still on the island."

"Hmm, so, although the prophet was not in the sacred land, if he had already

awakened, then he will appear as our savior.”

“That is the duty of the Prophet. I believe that he will definitely save the island. However, he still needs a fiancée who is in charge of assisting him.”

“There is none other than Miss Carlton.”

“...That is true. Since her lifespan hasn’t been reduced to awaken the Prophet, she really isn’t on the verge of death, and might be the best partner to draw out his powers.”

*Reducing lifespan? The one who awakened the Prophet would face death...?*

Fergus suspected that he had misheard.

*No, Brian had let it slip once before, he said that they had to sacrifice Lydia or something.*

*Then, if the Prophet was in the sacred land at the time, Lydia would.....*

Patrick had repeatedly said to Lydia that it wouldn’t be dangerous, and Professor Carlton accepted as a result, but in fact, it was a dangerous act that would reduce Lydia’s lifespan.

If he had told the truth, she would certainly not have agreed.

If it was a woman from the clan, they may have been willing to make that sacrifice for the McKeel family, but Lydia was different.

Even so, could they go and take everything from her for the sake of this island? Although Fergus had been uninformed about the situation, he was the next clan head and rushed about everywhere to find Aurora’s daughter. In the end, he found Lydia.

He himself was one of the people responsible for destroying Lydia’s happiness.

When Patrick was about to leave, Fergus quickly hid, watching as he left the room.

However, he immediately followed behind Patrick.

When Patrick walked out of the room, Fergus caught up with him from behind and moved around to block him.

“You lied to Lydia, didn’t you?”

Fergus stared at him, yet he was motionless and not even frowning.

“Were you eavesdropping?”

“You also lied to me.”

“Because the clan head said it was not necessary to tell you everything.”

Fergus angrily grabbed Patrick’s lapels.

“Fergus, you have to get rid of your emotional bad habits, no matter what the affair, the clan head must take the clan’s interests as priority.”

“Interests? Killing the Earl and forcing Lydia to obey are the clan’s interests? If things turn out to be like this, how would it be possible that she’d help us!”

“It depends on how you persuade her. In short, the most important thing now is to find the two of them. The clan head is also looking forward to your abilities.”

What he meant was that Fergus must find and bring them.

Fergus didn’t know whether or not his father had expectations of him, but Patrick truly did.

His anger towards Patrick lessened, and he released the strength in his hand. Patrick took his hand away from his clothes in his accustomed manner.

*Where is Lydia hiding now?*

This had nothing to do with abilities, he was just purely worried about Lydia.

If the Earl was the same, then it was also unreasonable for Fergus to worry.

But if they were found by someone from the McKeel clan, he didn’t know how they would treat the Earl, who was confirmed as the Prince.

“Returning to the main topic, where did they actually hide? There is no information in any village.”

No matter which clan it was, it would be difficult to imagine that the neighboring village would help conceal outsiders, thus his father expanded the search to the wilderness.

But at that time, Fergus thought of one thing.

*The Connaught clan.* The Earl seemed to be very close with the Connaught clan, furthermore, the only McKeel clan member who discovered this should only be Fergus.

Because only Fergus knew about that day where the Connaught girl came here, hoping to share herbs, when in fact she was sent by the Earl.

The islanders had no reason to hide outsiders, let alone the British, who are being pursued.

Bringing that up, the islanders originally despised the guys from Britain who came and bought land, as well as the British officials who suppressed the Highlanders everywhere. The McKeel clansmen also thought this from the beginning.

*However, I don’t know how the Earl made the Connaught clan his ally.*

Fergus turned around in silence, leaving Patrick seemingly in anger. He didn't intend on telling Patrick about it, but he didn't know what to do. The Prince will bring disaster to the island, was it really okay for him to let the Prince escape?

But if he captures the Earl, with regards to Lydia, the McKeel clan will be an enemy of her fiancé.

Although he didn't know what ought to be done, he couldn't stay still.

*Where is the Connaught village, which is closest to the sacred land?* As he thought, he went to the stables.

\*

Edgar stood under the gloomy sky where the sun had already set. Lydia found his back, and thus came out from the residence.

His blonde hair was fluttering in the wind. The surrounding air was clearly dark gray, yet his hair seemed to contain a faint light.

In spite of his overcoat being blown up by the wind, he stood motionless, staring at the sea.

As Lydia looked at Edgar, she suddenly felt that he was very far away, so she was uneasy.

She thought, even though she was used to seeing that slender back, but if he turned out to be someone else, then what would she do?

*If Edgar was no longer Edgar...*

Her heart was afraid, so she hurried over.

Although Edgar promised not to let this happen, Lydia really could not imagine what kind of "Prince" existed in Edgar's body.

"Lydia?"

He noticed the sound of footsteps and looked back; it was the usual Edgar. In order to not make Lydia run, he quickly walked towards her.

"Is it okay for you to be up?"

"Yeah, the fever is gone, and I don't feel dizzy."

He reached out and touched Lydia's forehead to confirm, and seemingly heaved a sigh of relief, yet he hastily withdrew his hand and stepped back a little.

Sure enough, Edgar was very concerned, he thought that it was because of him that the Aurora fairy's blade brought pain to Lydia, so after that, he no longer visited Lydia's room.

Lydia took the initiative to shorten the distance between them, she wanted to believe that this wasn't caused by Edgar.

Despite being puzzled, he no longer avoided her.

"You have to rest more, you practically haven't eaten dinner, right?"

"I've been waiting in the room all along, but you didn't come, so..."

*So I got out of bed.*

Although Lydia was still unable able to say cute words such as "I wanted to see you", Edgar smiled regardless.

His fingers wrapped around Lydia's wind-blown hair, then he used his hands to embrace her cheeks and kissed her.

"The wind is quite strong here, let's go back to the mansion."

"No, it's all right here."

"Then let's go to the side of that house, where there are benches."

Edgar was the same as usual. However, since knowing that he inherited the Prince's memories, the anxiety harbored in Lydia's chest became greater as time went by.

It wasn't a big deal. She had been preparing for the wedding without knowing the circumstances these few months, and never doubted his feelings during this period.

*However, if the "Prince" appears, then what should I do?*

*If Edgar disappears, what should I do?*

*No, I don't want to see him like that.*

"What's wrong?"

Lydia's golden green eyes were suddenly wet. Edgar peered at her, worried.

"No, it's nothing."

Once she stepped away, she felt dizzy again.

Edgar reached out, surprised, but Lydia desperately pretended that it was nothing.

"I'm fine, I just accidentally stepped on my skirt."

"Lydia, it's best you return to your room, your condition had finally improved, if you get worse again because of me....."

"No, it's not your fault, it's because of the Aurora fairy's magic."

Lydia ran to the bench and sat down, Edgar had no choice but to sit down with a look of helplessness.

“Edgar, you won’t leave by yourself, right?”

“No way.”

“We can return to London together, right?”

“.....Yeah.”

He paused a little before answering, Lydia couldn’t help but feel sad because of this, and her heart was filled with a bad premonition.

Lydia did not know what to do, so she reached for Edgar. Edgar embraced her after holding her hand, and she finally breathed a sigh of relief.

If it was like usual, Lydia would definitely be shy to the point of wanting to escape, but now, even if Edgar held her body tightly, she even felt unsatisfied.

Lydia didn’t find out that the reason Edgar hadn’t relaxed his strength was because she was clutching him tightly. She began to speak:

“It always feels like we haven’t seen each other for a long time.”

“Yes, almost nine hours, right?”

“It’s even more. We hadn’t seen each other in a week.”

“I feel like it’s been a year.”

“When we were separated, I dreamed about you.”

“You finally like me enough to dream about me?”

“I dreamed that you and Raven were gardening, the greenhouse was full of flowers, and there was a very beautiful flower bed.”

“Ohh, I mentioned the same thing to Raven before. I always did not want to miss out on decorating you with flowers.”

“Did you want to plant flowers?”

“Do you prefer to dress up with gems?”

“No, I like flowers. I want to grow flowers everyday to decorate you with, and brew tea with Raven for you..... this is much more wonderful than a ball.”

Lydia finally loosened her strength and was able to smile.

Although her feelings had already calmed down, she once again felt her whole body ache, but she endured it, as she wanted to stay a while longer.

“If this continues, Lydia will die!”

Nico stormed into the reception room where Edgar and Raven were.

Lydia fainted again and was bedridden. The situation still hadn’t improved the next day.

She suddenly had a fever, then the fever broke as if nothing happened, and she

practically hadn't eaten anything.

Moreover, it really seemed that as long as Edgar was beside her, her condition would worsen.

"Every time that happens, her body won't be able to hold on."

It was only natural that Edgar was really worried.

"Nico, as long as I am a little farther, will Lydia get better?"

"I think the problem doesn't lie here, besides, if we leave this island, the situation might become worse."

"What did you say?"

Nico worriedly sat on a chair with a wooden elbow rest.

"I don't know the details either, however, only the magic of the Aurora fairy can purify its blade. This island has their protective magic, so we can only stay here and let the wound heal over time."

"...Which means you want me to leave Lydia behind?"

Although his emotions were mixed with anger, Edgar vaguely had this feeling for a long time.

Perhaps Lydia also felt it.

She asked Edgar whether he would leave by himself. She didn't hesitate to hide the fact that her condition was worsening, and didn't want to leave Edgar's side.

Lydia's heart had already become increasingly close to Edgar, yet now, he was honestly unable to feel happy about that.

*In the end, how long would it take for the Aurora fairy magic to disappear? How long must I separate from her again?*

The situation already exceeded his expectations, forcing him to be confronted with a tougher choice.

The matters began to change with screams coming from outside.

"Please...Please stop!"

It was Kelly's voice and another man talking to her.

"You are the woman the Earl sent before, right? Why are you here?"

"Let go of me!"

Raven immediately ran to the window and opened the curtains to confirm.

"The person who came is Fergus McKeel."

As he reported, voices came from outside once more.

“As expected, after all, Earl Ashenbert is here, correct?”

Edgar also went to the window, and he remembered the red-haired man wearing a kilt.

Kelly struggled to shake off Fergus’s hand and escape, resulting in the basket falling from her hands.

She had gone out to pick medicinal herbs for Lydia. A red and black object fell out from the basket with the herbs.

Fergus curiously picked up the object to look at it, and Kelly took the opportunity to flee the scene.

“Ah! Hey, wait a minute!”

She had already ran into the mansion, and Fergus clicked his tongue in discontentment.

Then he looked up at the mansion and loudly shouted:

“Hey, Earl, can you hear me! I am Fergus McKeel! Come out if you hear this, I have something to talk with you about!”

The landlord arrived at the room where Edgar and the others were, and asked them how he ought to reply. Edgar asked him to wait a moment, then observed the situation by the window.

Fergus continued to speak alone to the mansion, which made no sound.

“I came by myself, and I haven’t told anyone the matter of you having relations with the Connaught clan.”

“He seems to be alone.”

Edgar whispered.

“Did he truly not speak of it?”

Raven took a cautious approach.

“.....If you don’t come out, I will have to return and tell the clan head everything!”

At this moment, Nico spoke, after contemplating from the beginning.

“The McKeel clan might be able to save Lydia.”

“Nico, is that true?”

“The McKeel family had always conducted exchanges with the Aurora fairies and intermarried, if even the McKeel clan is unable to handle this kind of matter, it means that they really are hopeless.”

“It seems that I have no choice but to have a chat with that boy.”

Edgar looked around as if seeking approval, then opened the window.

Fergus immediately turned his attention to this window.

“You say you’re alone? How courageous, if that’s the case, I can’t let you return.”

Fergus was shocked, as if he didn’t expect the risks in doing so. His eyes briefly shifted around nervously, but his mood immediately revived, refusing to accept defeat and said:

“If you can do it, try it! That’s right, isn’t Lydia ill? Since you’re still alive and kicking, then there must be something wrong with Lydia. I may be able to save her!”

“What are you talking about?”

Although Edgar calmly responded, Fergus was quite sure that something was wrong with Lydia.

“I saw the Connaught clan’s housemaid picking medicinal herbs just now, but other than the herbs, she had to have gone looking for this thing.”

He picked up the black lump that had fallen from Kelly’s basket.

“This is a seal’s liver. When fairy magic enters the human body, this is used to detoxify. It’s an Aurora fairy’s magic within Lydia’s body, isn’t that right? And it’s the same magic that killed Brian in the sacred land at that time, right? If that’s the case, this kind of thing has no effect at all.”

Fergus’s hand crushed the dried liver.

“Very well, it seems that it wasn’t a complete waste of time speaking with you.”

Edgar turned away from the window sill.

Raven intended to follow, but Edgar told him to stay, and then left the reception room. After Edgar walked out to confirm the surroundings, he found that Fergus was really standing alone in place, waiting for him.

“How’s Lydia’s situation? Is it very serious?”

Fergus had once threatened that Lydia originally should have been his fiancée, so Edgar felt irritated at his inquiry.

“It has nothing to do with you.”

As long as Fergus confronted Edgar, it seemed that he would get nauseous with anger. He immediately raised his eyebrow and said:

“Oh is that so, but you don’t understand anything when it comes to fairies, right? People who are associated with Unseelie Courts like you staying by her

side ought to bring her a lot of pain.”

Sure enough, Edgar’s presence had made Lydia’s situation worse. He took a deep breath, trying not allow the anxiety show on his face. However, his mood still hadn’t calmed down.

“So, does the McKeel clan have medicine that can treat a wound caused by an Aurora fairy’s blade?”

“We don’t.”

“Then I have nothing to say to you.”

Edgar prepared to turn away, and at this time, Fergus quickly added:

“Wait a minute! Although there is no medicine, there should be a way to eliminate the magic. In the McKeel clan’s land, there is a region where it’s hard for fairy magic to bring out its effects. Although the cure for Lydia is dependent on the situation, it can surely make her recover. As long as she can stay for two or three years.....”

“Three years!?”

He couldn’t help but interrupt Fergus’ words.

“You want me to be apart from Lydia for that long?”

“If you don’t want to, then there’s no other choice but let her die.”

Fergus put his hands on his hips as if showing off that he had the advantage.

“The condition to saving Lydia is that you must leave this island. If you agree, I won’t send troops to pursue you until you escape safely.”

“You really are somewhat kind.”

“If you were caught and killed by the McKeel clan, Lydia would hate us. If it came to that, perhaps she will worsen from the powerful magic inside her that could come loose. Of course, I hope you don’t take a step closer to the island. If you return to the island again, we would have to battle with the ‘Prince’ anyway.”

“Are you still planning to take Lydia away from me here, in a situation where you’re not being hated? Even if the means to do so is tough, this is also an opportunity to make her yours.”

“Looking down on me, how could I force her! I pledge this on the McKeel clan’s name! However, I’ll say this upfront first, I will make Lydia forget about you!”

Which meant that he had plenty of time to make it possible.

On the other hand, this was very detrimental for Edgar.

Having to be apart from him for such a long time, would Lydia be willing to wait for him?

“No, I don’t want this!”

Lydia said firmly and seemingly blamed Edgar as she leaned forward and grabbed him by his coat.

“Didn’t you say you wouldn’t leave me alone!”

“I don’t want to leave you either, but to continue on like this, your body won’t recover.”

Edgar held her hand, trying to comfort her, but she shook off his hand and turned away.

“.....If you leave me, it means breaking off our engagement. Because if we separate, you will most likely fall for other people.”

“Lydia, there’s only you in my heart, I promise I won’t change.”

“The promise you made doesn’t count at all..... besides, I might change.”

“Will you forget me?”

“The Lydia that you like might disappear.”

“There will be no such thing.”

However, she firmly shook her head.

“No, if we separate now, we’ll definitely break up!”

“Only I can do that, and furthermore, we won’t break up.”

“Does the McKeel clan really have a way for me to recover? If the Aurora fairy’s magic is really strong, perhaps it’s the same whether or not I get treated, isn’t that so? If that’s the case, I will certainly regret it very much, I don’t wish to die under the circumstances of regret and being apart from you!”

They really had no evidence.

*But if we leave the island, Lydia will perhaps.....*

“Edgar, even it’s for a short time, it doesn’t matter..... please let me stay by your side.”

She pleaded with her golden-green eyes, which were filled with tears, and Edgar’s feelings couldn’t help but waver as well. He caressed her sweet caramel hair and held his arms around Lydia, who was leaning into his embrace.

Yet, the two finally managed to nestle together like this.....

He could also surely sense their feelings overlapping with each other. For Edgar, this was the first time he had to be separated from a precious lover, and the

situation was extremely irrational.

“Lydia, I don’t want the time spent with you together to be very short. I hope that you stay by my side for a very long time, and if possible, I hope we can be together until we grow old.”

“What if while you’re waiting, I pass away.....”

Lydia was probably worried about the Prince’s memories within Edgar’s body. Indeed, the Edgar now is not like the usual people in society, he wasn’t just a fiancee who would travel long distance for business matters.

It wasn’t known what impact the Prince’s memories would have on Edgar; moreover, as long as Edgar was the Prince, if he set foot on the island once again, then he must be aware that he would be hunted down by the McKeel clan.

Even if Lydia recovered, it’s possible that she will be unable to meet him again easily.

“I don’t want to wait either.....”

Lydia trembled in fear, and shook herself off Edgar’s arms.

“I don’t want to go to the McKeel clan either! The McKeel clan intends to kill you... isn’t that right? Where exactly is the Prophet? As long as I am here, they’ll use me for the Prophet, and then it will be the same as helping the McKeel clan, who want to kill you!”

“I will not lose, whether it’s the Prophet or the Prince.”

Lydia furiously shook her head again.

“If you leave me, I’ll hide. If the McKeel family try to find me, I’ll run away! I’ll be waiting alone until the moment my life is over!”

After having raise her voice, she suddenly pressed her chest in pain, incessantly taking hurried breaths.

“Lydia!”

“Miss, are you alright?”

Kelly ran over to Lydia, wanting to bring her water to drink, but she was unable to drink it smoothly and coughed violently.

“Earl, I’m sorry.”

As long as he was around, it would affect her condition. There was simply no meaning in continuing this.

Edgar nodded and then left the room.

“That’s too bad... poor Lydia.”

Nico sipped the tea that Raven made while deftly rubbing his eyes.

“Earl, if Lydia goes back together with you, she can only wait for death, but if she remains on the island, it would just be painful. I really can’t watch this anymore.”

Nico was right. Edgar sighed.

“Hey Nico, can Lydia truly recover completely like Fergus said?”

“Since the fragments of the blade had already been taken out, I don’t think it should be too difficult to eliminate it. However, I don’t know how many years it will take, so in reality, I won’t know until we try the treatment.”

“Lord Edgar, may I ask what Miss Lydia said?”

Raven rarely took the initiative to ask questions. It seemed he was very concerned about the development of the situation.

“Well..... she said that she wouldn’t remain here.”

“Earl, it can’t be that you intend to have let Lydia die?”

“Do you think I should leave her here?”

“If that happens, it will be shameful on her.”

“What should I do?”

“.....It’s bad either way.”

Nico sipped tea and rubbed his eyes once more.

“Lydia is probably beginning to give in to despair. The reason why she said that she wanted to return even if she were to die was perhaps because she knew that I inherited the Prince’s memory, so it’s a bit of a hit.”

Even while knowing the truth, she had shown that her feelings toward Edgar did not change, however she felt anxious. There was also hesitation over whether she should marry as things are now.

For this reason, she was afraid of separation. She was perhaps afraid that their relationship will inevitably collapse if they separated and calmed down.

She was probably thinking that she wasn’t going to live long anyway, and so it would be better to swiftly go along with only her feelings. This was why she was saying such things.

“What? Inherited the Prince’s memories?”

Nico called out, suddenly slamming the teacup against the table.

“Oh..... that’s right, you still don’t know.”

Lydia already knew about the matter, so he felt no need to conceal it. Nico stood up from his chair, his paws on the table and fur raising up. "You..... How could you say it so easily! P-Prince's memories! What is going on!"

"It's a long story."

"This means..... that you're the Prince?"

"Well, I guess so."

"What about Lydia? Does she know?"

"She knew about it in the sacred land."

"Oooh....."

Nico held a depressed expression, with the fur of his head grasped messily by both his paws. Worried, Raven pulled out a comb from his pocket.

"So Lydia thinks that she will simply come back with me and not know what would happen to me, and be able to die happily."

Nico didn't even glance at the comb, leaving his fur a mess as he came down from the chair.

".....I can't stand this any longer."

He staggered out of the room.

Raven wanted to chase after Nico, but mindfully looked back at Edgar. After Edgar nodded in consent, he bowed and immediately left the room.

"Hey, Raven, since when did you guys start lying to me and Lydia?"

Nico was outside for a while, with Raven still silently behind him.

Moreover, at Nico's harsh inquiry, he looked as if he trembled a little.

"After Prince died."

"In other words, the Earl was hiding it from Lydia in preparations for the wedding?"

"Lord Edgar is also quite troubled."

"What do you think the Earl would do?"

"..... I do not know."

"I don't have the courage to see the end. Therefore, Raven, I have to separate from you too."

*Separate.* Raven mumbled the word, as if chewing at the meaning.

"I've told Lydia before, I'd be sad if I saw her face, so I will leave at this rate."

"Where are you going?"

"Who knows. Should be a place where there's no one on this island."

Nico did not stop and continued walking straight ahead. Although Raven continued to follow him, while he seemingly wanted to say something, he did not say anything.

"You should have already made up your mind to follow the Earl for a lifetime, I really respect you for that. However, you should think of me occasionally."